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POWER GROWS OUT OF THE BARREL OF A GUNBOAT: THE U.S. IN SINO-SOVIET CRISES

Kenneth G. Weiss



CENTER FOR NAVAL ANALYSES

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Introduction

During his trip to Beijing in August 1979, Vice President Mondale declared that "any nation which seeks to weaken or isolate [China]...assumes a stance counter to American interests."¹ On 25 August 1980 in a major statement on China, now President Reagan said "I will cooperate and consult with all countries [read China] of the [Pacific] area in a mutual effort to stand firm against aggression or a search for hegemony [read the Soviet Union] which threatens the peace or stability of the area."² In short, the U.S. has declared an interest in Chinese security and by extension, Sino-Soviet confrontations.

Thus, U.S. politico-military options in connection with Sino-Soviet crises must be carefully evaluated because:

- Sino-Soviet enmity and competition for support against each other is likely to continue and thus Sino-Soviet confrontations are a likely feature of the foreseeable future.
- Sino-Soviet crises per se impact on U.S. interests (the Sino-Soviet proxy war in Kampuchea directly affects Thailand, a U.S. ally.)

- The U.S.'s increasing association with Chinese security may prompt Chinese questions regarding U.S. actions in the event of a crisis.

Since the U.S. has a declared interest in China's security, the question then becomes how can the U.S. influence Sino-Soviet crises? And closely related to that question is how can the U.S. orchestrate its politico-military instruments, especially naval ones, in such crises. To answer these questions, we will look at U.S., Soviet, and Chinese behavior in two serious crises in the past that involved all three powers: The Ussuri River Crisis (1969) and Sino-Vietnamese Border Crisis (1979). Once we have done so, we can project the key features of their future behavior and analyze the measures the U.S. can take to influence such crises.

The following discussion is based on Center for Naval Analyses Memorandum, (CNA)80-1501, "Power Grows Out of the Barrel of a Gunboat (U)," by Kenneth G. Weiss, Unclassified, 25 Nov 1980; Center for Naval Analyses Memorandum (CNA)81-0428 "Friendship Passed: The Sino-Vietnamese Border (1979) (U)," by Kenneth G. Weiss, Unclassified, 9 Jun 1981; and Center for Naval Analyses Memorandum (CNA)81-1200.09, "Snow Flight: The Ussri and Other Border Incidents of 1969 (U)," by Kenneth G. Weiss, Unclassified, 31 July 1981.

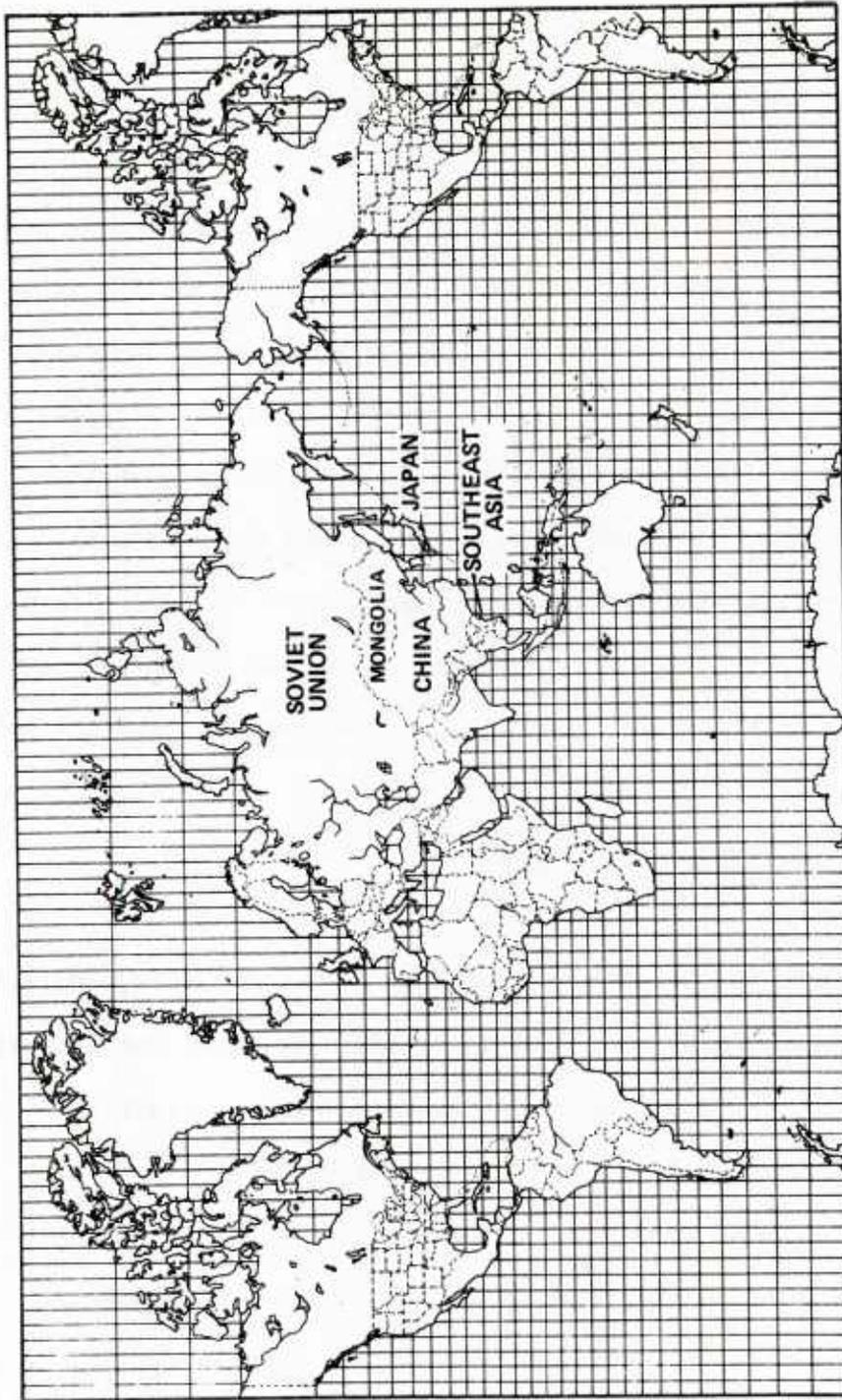


FIG. 1: THE SOVIET UNION, CHINA, AND THE WORLD

SNOW FIGHT: THE USSURI AND OTHER BORDER INCIDENTS OF 1969

THE EMERGING TRIANGLE, AUGUST 1968-MARCH 1969

That the clashes along the Sino-Soviet border in 1969 made possible the rapprochement between the United States and China in 1972 is well known. However, the crisis itself was an outgrowth of a Soviet reaction to signs of such a rapprochement that appeared in the latter part of 1968--and the Kremlin's perception that, in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, a divided Chinese leadership and people could be bullied into settling their differences with Moscow on Soviet terms. In responding to these circumstances, Moscow, in effect, thrust an uncertain Washington into the center of a crisis between the USSR and China.

The Soviet Factor, 1968

From the onset of the Sino-Soviet dispute in the 1960s, the Kremlin must have been haunted by the possibility of a rapprochement between the United States and China. However, as the ideological struggle shifted towards political and military confrontation, Washington's growing involvement in Vietnam (1965) and China's militant self-absorption in the Cultural Revolution (1966) rendered such a prospect unlikely. In fact, to China's disgust, Moscow and Washington were improving their relations by 1968 in the area of arms control and nuclear non-proliferation.³

The Soviets then were free to respond with impunity to growing border difficulties and China's anti-Sovietism by strengthening their military posture in the Far East.* In 1965, the Soviets began a staged improvement in readiness, equipment, logistics, and numbers of their forces along the border.⁵ In 1966, they signed a treaty with Ulan Bator which allowed them to station troops in Mongolia.⁶ The Soviet Navy was also becoming more active in the seas near China. For example, in 1968, Soviet ships out of Vladivostok visited Japan, India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Iraq, South Yemen, and Somalia.⁷

Politically, the Soviets competed with the Chinese for the support of other communist countries and parties; they also began to improve their relations with countries on China's periphery. As the Sino-Soviet dispute intensified, Moscow tried to gain Japanese investment for Siberia. Soviet political and military support for North Vietnam reduced Chinese influence in Hanoi. According to Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko, Moscow's cooperation with Burma was "being strengthened year by year." The Kremlin was also anxious to diminish Beijing's influence in the subcontinent. In 1968, the Soviets tried to expand

* By 1964, the ideological struggle had produced border problems serious enough to require a conference on the subject. The Chinese demanded that the "unequal" treaties with Imperial and Soviet Russia be replaced with a new equal treaty. This new treaty would be based upon the status quo ante, but would clear up ambiguities in the old treaties. In the meantime, the Chinese wished to preserve the status quo. The Soviets apparently refused to discuss the entire boundary issue, preferring to limit negotiations to areas disputed by both sides. They also refused to recognize the old treaties as unequal. An area in particular contention was the Amur-Ussuri region. The conference produced no solution. By 1967, the border situation was becoming quite difficult.⁴

their "friendly relations" with India to Pakistan by supplying arms to Islamabad.⁸

With the Chinese distracted by the Cultural Revolution, Soviet efforts to contain China were relatively successful. In June 1968, Moscow could claim with some accuracy that

China's prestige as a great power has been considerably undermined. The actual rupture with the camp of peace loving neutral states and the rejection of friendship with the Soviet Union and the states of the socialist community further increased the PRC's isolation in the world. The 'cultural revolution' considerably aggravated China's relations with its neighbors and reduced the contacts of Chinese statesmen with the heads of governments of other countries to a minimum.⁹

And as the Cultural Revolution ended in fighting among radical Red Guards, economic difficulties, imposition of PLA control in the provinces, and factional disputes in the "Maoist" leadership, the Kremlin could hope that Mao and his anti-Soviet policies would be repudiated. After the Great Leap, Mao barely survived Peng Dehuai's challenge at the Lushun conference in 1959. That the Soviets expected the effort to come again from the army is evidenced by their continual appeals to the PLA and their claim that it was Mao's sole base of support.¹⁰

However, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 upset this favorable situation and made possible a rapprochement between China and the United States. Military plans for the intervention apparently

forced the Soviets to anticipate potential threats from both the U.S. and China. To prepare for the invasion and to deter a reaction from the U.S., the Soviets held large-scale naval and ground exercises in the West.¹¹ Significantly, these exercises occurred in roughly the same June-July timeframe in which the Soviets reportedly held military exercises near the Sino-Mongolian border.¹² Perhaps to underscore this warning to the Chinese, Colonel General Oleg Losik, commander of the Far Eastern Military District, noted in late July that his troops were "vigilantly guarding the borders of our fatherland on the shores of the Pacific and the Amur."¹³ During the invasion itself, Soviet troops in the Far East were apparently alerted.¹⁴ The Soviets Navy probably also assumed a heightened readiness posture in the Pacific as well as the Norwegian, Baltic, and Mediterranean Seas.¹⁵ The Chinese complained of an increase in border violations by Soviet aircraft before and during the intervention in late August.¹⁶ The Chinese then were not only alarmed by the Czech invasion itself but also by related Soviet military activities in the Far East. Thus, Soviet actions on the "Pacific and the Amur" precipitated a debate in Beijing on improving relations with the United States.

The China Factor, 1968

Prior to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, Beijing charged that the U.S. and Soviet Union were "colluding" against the Peoples' Republic. (The Chinese were quick to pounce on any improvement in

Soviet-American relations as evidence of collusion.) Thus, China pursued a dual adversary policy of opposing the "imperialism" of the United States and the "revisionism" of the Soviet Union. This was the foreign policy equivalent of a domestic policy of Cultural Revolution--a fundamentalist celebration of the thought of Mao and the primacy of China. However, even in the Cultural Revolution, there was a debate over the wisdom of opposing both superpowers.¹⁷

The Soviet threat was increasingly difficult to ignore. In 1967, Foreign Minister Chen Yi complained about the Soviet military buildup. The Chinese later denounced the 1968 naval activities of the Soviet Union in Southeast Asia and Indian Ocean areas. Beijing also complained of Soviet efforts in cooperation with U.S. to "encircle" China with a ring of hostile countries.¹⁸

In the Zhongnanhai,* the issue split the leadership into three groups: the moderates, the military, and radicals. As Thomas Gottlieb points out, the moderates, led by Zhou Enlai, advocated an opening to the United States in order to deal with the Soviet threat. The military, led by Lin Biao, argued that the United States represented the primary threat and that an opening to Washington would provoke Moscow. The radicals favored the dual adversary strategy. Mao apparently stood above the battle.¹⁹

* The Chinese leadership compound in Beijing.

The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the phasing out of the Cultural Revolution in the summer of 1968 reduced the influence of the radicals and transformed the debate into a two-way struggle. The Cultural Revolution was already losing force, but the Brezhnev doctrine of limited sovereignty spurred the radicals' opponents to bring the disorders to an end. Nevertheless, the military continued to minimize the Soviet threat and argued against provoking Moscow. They also continued to emphasize "collusion" between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. If Washington and Moscow were colluding, there was little reason to make an overture to the United States. However, if they were "contending," as the moderates argued, then Beijing could play the U.S. against the Soviet Union. They, in turn, emphasized the Soviet military threat. Significantly, it was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was associated with the moderates, that protested Soviet violations of Chinese air space in August and linked them with the invasion of Czechoslovakia. However, Lin did apparently agree to respond to Soviet military exercises just before the Czech invasion by improving China's military posture along the border. Several main-force divisions were redeployed, and the quasi-military functions of the Production and Construction Corps in the threatened area were reemphasized.²⁰

The issue came to a head at the 12th Plenum of the Central Committee in October. Foreign policy seems to have been high on the agenda. Mao apparently made an important speech denouncing the Soviet Union as China's primary foe.²¹ In the communique issued after the

Plenum, the Soviet Union and the U.S. were said to be "colluding and struggling" to redivide the world.²² The contradictory ideas of Lin and Zhou were joined in a way that favored the moderates. The communique also emphasized the "unprecedented unity" of the party, and the "victory" of the Cultural Revolution.²³ This continued the heightened efforts of August and September to end the turmoil. The Soviets were being warned that the country was not as divided as they thought and that aggression would be met by a united China. And, in November, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced China's willingness to revive the Warsaw Talks on 20 February 1969.²⁴ For the first time since the Vietnam War, Sino-American relations were linked to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.* The Chinese were signalling their desire for substantive negotiations.

The Warsaw Talks, May-November 1968

Moscow seemed to be aware of the split in the Chinese leadership and was determined to keep the U.S. and China apart. The Soviet media frequently noted the political struggle in the Maoist leadership, and at various times identified the three factions.²⁶ Although the February meeting was cancelled at the last minute, a Soviet broadcast to Albania just after the March 2 incident noted an effort by Zhou Enlai in the mid-1950s to establish ties with the U.S., but he was stopped by a

* Indeed, in October, the Chinese finally reported the Paris Peace Talks, and tacitly dropped their opposition to negotiations with the U.S. on the war.²⁵

Chinese general.²⁷ In a subsequent broadcast, Mao was identified with Zhou's effort.²⁸ Significantly, it was charged that the Chinese general, Peng Dehau, was purged for his role in the episode.²⁹ The Kremlin then had some inkling of the policy debate and may have calibrated its actions accordingly.

The Soviets were concerned about the revival of the Warsaw Talks. Indeed, they claimed that the talks had damaged "socialist unity" in the past. In 1965, Luo Ruiqing, the PLA Chief of Staff, argued that China should meet the growing U.S. threat in Vietnam by cooperating with the Soviet Union to support Hanoi. Luo's argument was rejected, and he was purged. The Kremlin charged, inaccurately, that the U.S. and China agreed in Warsaw that Beijing would not intervene in the Vietnam War. The U.S., in turn, promised not to threaten China. However, in the Cultural Revolution, the talks became infrequent and were downgraded. In January 1968, there was a single session, and China was represented only by a charge d'affaires.³⁰

Nevertheless, Moscow remained suspicious. As the May 29 session approached, the Soviets renewed their charge that the talks represented "collusion" between the U.S. and China.³¹ Perhaps to forestall this "collusion," Moscow apparently offered in April to renew river navigation talks with China.³² And, in part to emphasize their own collusion with the U.S., the Kremlin on May 20 signalled its desire for arms discussions with the U.S.³³ With Paris peace negotiations begin-

ning in May, the military could argue that the talks were futile and would only provoke the Kremlin. On May 28, China announced that the discussions would not be held.³⁴

Yet Moscow had reason to remain concerned. The talks were postponed only to November--after the U.S. election. The Chinese explanation for the cancellation stated that their ambassador to Warsaw was unable to attend the discussions, hinting that the next session might be at the ambassadorial level.³⁵ In addition, the Soviets were upset by Washington's gesture to Beijing just before the talks were to begin. State Department officials Nicholas deB. Katzenbach and Eugene V. Rostow called upon China to end its isolation and renew contacts and exchanges with the U.S.³⁶ The Soviets linked this gesture with the Chinese Foreign Ministry's failure on May 27 to accompany complaints about increased U.S. warship visits to Hong Kong with a "serious warning."³⁷ And in mid-August, the Chinese rejected the Soviet offer to renew negotiations.³⁸

It is possible that Moscow was concerned about the impact an invasion of Czechoslovakia would have on U.S.-China relations. However, May's events probably taught the Soviets that pressure and "collusion" were effective in dealing with a divided Chinese leadership and people. Thus, the Kremlin's military activities in the Far East that summer were probably not only defensive preparations for the invasion, but also an effort to intimidate the Chinese.³⁹ Significantly, on the

day of the invasion, Moscow was prepared to go ahead with a preplanned announcement of an agreement to begin U.S.-Soviet arms discussions.⁴⁰

After China's reaction to the Czech invasion, the Kremlin had reason to fear the talks scheduled for November. The Soviets continued to press the U.S. for an early beginning of SALT talks postponed by the invasion.⁴¹ They supported President Johnson's bombing halt and expanded Paris peace negotiations of October.⁴² As the Chinese concluded the Central Committee meeting in late October, it was reported that Victor Louis, a Soviet journalist, made an unprecedented visit to Taiwan and met with Chiang Ching-kuo, the son of Mao's arch-enemy and ally of the U.S., Chiang Kai-shek.⁴³ And if Beijing did not get the message, the Soviet-Chinese Friendship Society commemorated the Soviet role in the Battle of Wuhan in 1938--a discrete reference to Moscow's aid to the Kuomintang in the Sino-Japanese War.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the Kremlin continued to pressure Beijing with its own charges that the Warsaw talks represented collusion between the U.S. and China against the Soviet Union.*⁴⁵ On October 2, Brezhnev suggested that, since Soviet troops were in Czechoslovakia, Czech troops should be stationed in the Soviet Union--along the Chinese border.⁴⁷ On October 31, the day the 12th Plenum concluded, Moscow rejected the Chinese Foreign Ministry's charges

* That the Chinese were sensitive to such claims was illustrated by an episode in late September 1968. Parade magazine suggested that a hotline be established between Washington and Beijing. Liturnaya Gazeta spuriously claimed that such a hotline had been established in 1967. The Chinese were so embarrassed that they severed the commercial radio-telephone link between San Francisco and Shanghai that had been in service since 1937.⁴⁶

in September that Soviet aircraft had violated Chinese air space.⁴⁸ And in commenting on the Plenum's communique, TASS noted that its stress on unity was belied by continuing evidence of provincial disorder.*⁴⁹

The Soviets were no doubt relieved when the U.S. cancelled the November 20 meeting after hearing nothing from Beijing.⁵¹

The Soviets Step Up the Pressure, November 1968-January 1969

However, Moscow was plainly upset when the Chinese responded on November 26, and proposed the talks be held on February 20. (The Chinese had been waiting for the dust to settle after the election and to give the new Nixon Administration time to take office.) The Soviets noted the significance of the Chinese reference to the Five Principles of Coexistence, of the similarity of Western and Chinese views on the Czech invasion, and of Western speculation concerning the possibility of playing China against the Soviet Union.⁵²

In part to derail the talks, the Soviets again emphasized collusion and pressure. Despite a series of U.S. and NATO military exercises in response to the Czech crisis in the fall and winter of 1968-1969, and Soviet unhappiness about the prospect of West Germany's Presidential

* In fact, earlier that month the Soviets reported that Beijing had halted the delivery of provincial newspapers to Soviet and other "socialist" embassies in the capital.⁵⁰ If so, it showed how sensitive the Zhongnanhai had become to Soviet claims of Chinese disunity.

elections being held in Berlin, the Soviets remained anxious to begin the SALT Talks.⁵³ After the election, Moscow responded favorably to President Johnson's suggestion for a summit on arms talks, but pulled back when the incoming Nixon Administration said it would not be bound by any agreement achieved at the meeting.⁵⁴ On the day of Nixon's inauguration, the Soviets again proposed an early start to the talks.⁵⁵ They also praised the beginning of the expanded Paris peace talks and apparently approved of North Korea's release of the Pueblo crew in January 1969.⁵⁶

Moscow also increased its pressure on Beijing. Perhaps, in part, to exploit Chinese fears of encirclement, the Soviets stepped up their diplomatic activity in the region: the Soviet Defense Minister and a Supreme Soviet delegation visited India and Ceylon, respectively; Afghanistan's Defense Minister, India's Prime Minister, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, and a North Korean economic delegation visited Moscow; and trade protocols were signed with Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, and Japan.⁵⁷ Moscow emphasized that Albania was China's only friend.⁵⁸ (The Chinese also complained that Breznev, Kosygin, and Podgorny visited Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, and other areas on the Sino-Soviet border "to incite anti-Chinese sentiments.")⁵⁹

Besides political pressure, the Soviets increased their military threats and pressure on China. In early December, Izvestiya published

General Losik's account of military exercises in the Far East. Significantly, Losik added:

A summer has passed that was full of portentous events in the life of the Soviet Armed Forces. The growing mastery of our soldiers, their greatness and nobility of spirit have been shown in the forces' summer exercises and the international aid to our class brothers in Czechoslovakia.⁶⁰

In late January, Pravda published an article in praise of former CCP leader Qu Quibai. According to the article, Qu Quibai claimed in 1931 that Mao had argued the year before in favor of achieving world revolution by provoking a world war between the USSR and Japan. In other words, if someone does not stop Mao from trying to instigate a war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, Moscow will occupy Manchuria, and Washington will do nothing in response.⁶¹ Significantly, in January and February, the Soviets intensified their patrolling of the Chenpao Island area in Manchuria.⁶² The number of incidents involving the border guards of the two countries increased. A particularly serious incident occurred on January 23.

The Soviet and Chinese accounts of the incident differ, of course. But they agree that a Chinese patrol, 25-28 strong, moved into the river ice area of Chenpao claimed by both sides. A Soviet patrol, led by the Senior Lieutenant Strelnikov killed in the March 2 incident, challenged the Chinese. In the ensuing argument, the Soviets claim that the Chinese shouted slogans, brandished their weapons, and rushed

them: "Strelnikov ordered the men to defend themselves from the blows of the Chinese with the butts of their machine guns." The Chinese said nothing about rushing the Soviets, but agreed that the Russians used the butts of their guns. Other than a claim that the luckless Strelnikov was saved from death by Private Denisenko, the Soviets were curiously silent about the outcome of the incident. The Chinese claim that the Soviet border patrol of eight was reinforced first by 30 soldiers and then by 80 more. The Chinese were forced to retreat. All of the Chinese were injured, some seriously. The Russians threatened that next time they would shoot.⁶³

The Chinese Decide to Strike Back, January-March 1969

The January 23 incident seems to have brought to a head a major policy debate in the Zhongnanhai. Since the November initiative, both the moderates and the military could point to events to justify their position. Soviet threats and pressure supported the moderates' contention that Moscow represented the primary enemy. Thus, China should move toward the lesser enemy, the United States, in order to confront the Soviet Union. Lin Biao, who had continually minimized the Soviet threat in public statements, could argue that the initiative provoked the Kremlin to take a threatening posture. Lin could also point to Moscow's demarche on arms talks on January 20 and Washington's favorable response as evidence of superpower collusion.⁶⁴

The U.S. overture was in trouble by late January. On January 27, the Chinese hinted that a withdrawal of 7th fleet ships from the Taiwan Straits would be appreciated.⁶⁵ Beijing had been disturbed by Victor Louis' visit to Taiwan.⁶⁶ A withdrawal of U.S. ships from the Straits would have strengthened the moderates' argument that the U.S. no longer presented a military threat and was not colluding with the Soviet Union. For the time being, a U.S. presence in the island would prevent the Soviet Union from establishing itself there. However, at a press conference on the same day, Nixon said that an improvement in Sino-American relations would depend upon "a change of attitude" in Beijing.⁶⁷

The debate seems to have ended in a compromise. It is difficult to know Mao's position in the policy struggle. The November initiative could not have been taken without his support. But the January 23rd incident seems to have persuaded him that the Soviets would have to be confronted directly. The testing of an H-bomb on December 27 was not enough to dissuade the Soviets from pressuring Beijing.⁶⁸ If so, he would need the support of Lin and the PLA. Indeed, he needed to persuade Moscow that the Chinese leadership and people were united in the face of Soviet intimidation. Since the Soviets made frequent references to a leadership struggle and veiled overtures to the PLA and Lin, it was important that Lin visibly support the policy.⁶⁹

Without a gesture from the U.S., the moderates were probably unable to make any headway against Lin's argument that it was unduly provocative to challenge Moscow on the border and pursue the U.S. initiative. Indeed, the Americans might view such a policy as a sign of weakness, further encouraging them to cooperate with the Soviet Union against China. To obtain Lin's support, Mao was probably willing to forgo the U.S. initiative. Two days after the January 23 incident, Mao appeared in public with Lin, and the PLA was warned to prepare for war with any enemy. Thereafter, Lin played a more prominent role in public. On February 18, the Zhongnanhai postponed the Warsaw Talks indefinitely.*⁷⁰

THE SINO-SOVIET CRISIS, MARCH-OCTOBER 1969

Mao had succeeded in rallying the Chinese leadership to challenge Moscow. As a result, China and the Soviet Union became embroiled in the most serious confrontation since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962.

The March 2 Incident

On March 2, Chinese and Soviet soldiers fought over Chenpao island.** Thirty-one Soviets, including Lieutenant Strelnikov, and an

* The Chinese used the defection to the U.S. of a charge d'affaires in the Netherlands as the ostensible reason for the postponement.

** The Soviets claim that the islands in the Amur-Ussuri River region belong to them by treaty demarcation. The Chinese argue that the treaties do not provide for the ownership of the islands. In lieu of such a provision, ownership is determined under international law by the Thalweg principle: the islands on the Chinese side of the main channel, including Chenpao, belong to China; those on the Soviet side belong to the Soviet Union. The Soviets call Chenpao Damansky Island.⁷¹

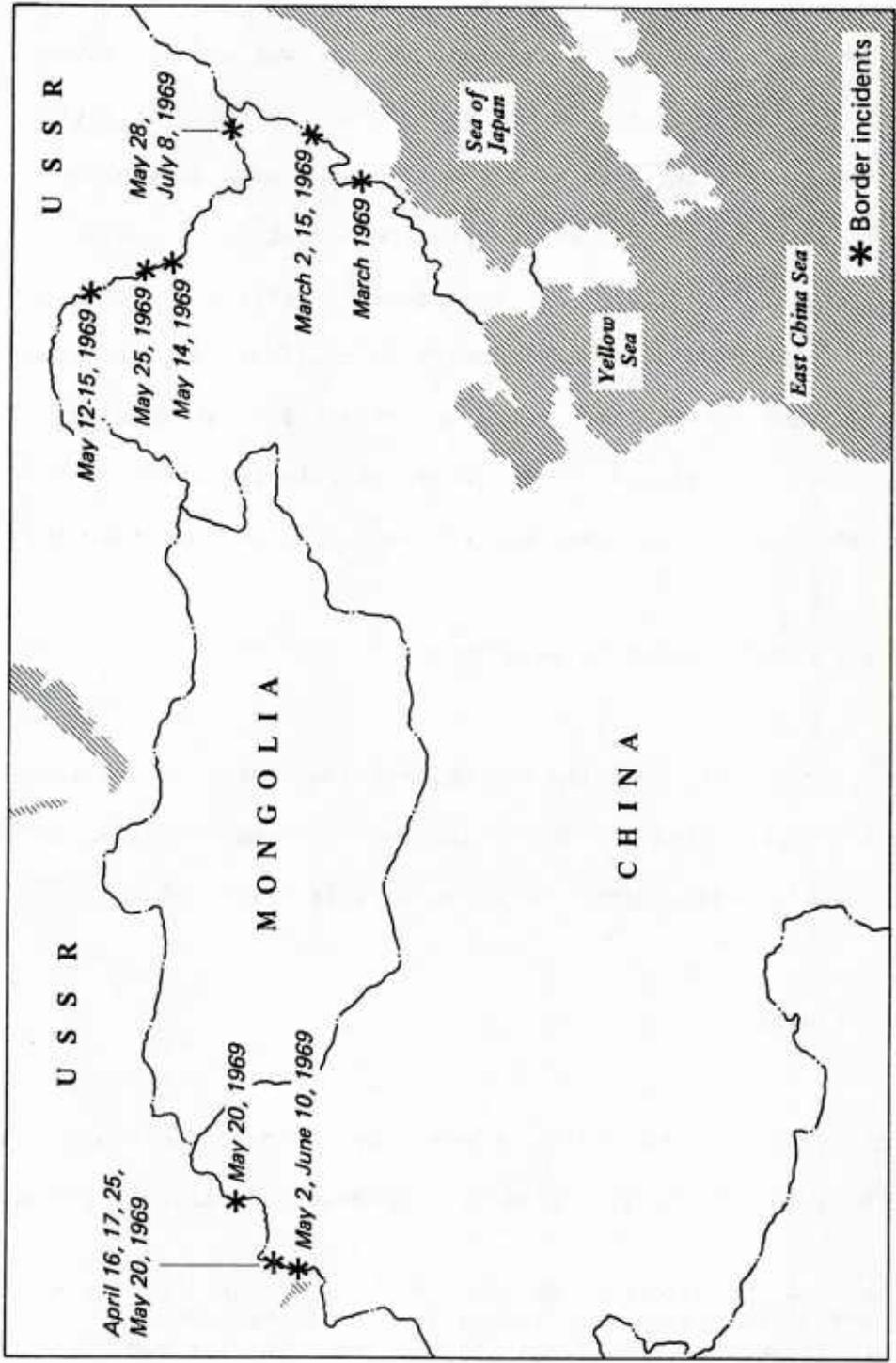


FIG. 2: SINO-SOVIET BORDER INCIDENTS, MARCH - JULY 1969

unknown number of Chinese, died in the clash. Both Moscow and Beijing claimed that the other was responsible for the incident.⁷³

However, Beijing was probably to blame. The anger, surprise, and speed of the Soviet protest indicated that Moscow was caught off balance.*⁷⁴ That popular demonstrations of Chinese unity throughout the country began immediately after the event also indicated preplanning on the part of Beijing. These demonstrations were followed by the convening of the long-delayed party congress in April, the adoption of a new party constitution, the designation of Lin Biao as heir apparent, and Lin's attack on the Soviet Union.⁷⁶ In addition, the Chinese admit that after the incident on January 23, Chinese border patrols in the area were supported by a large force.⁷⁷ Thus, even if the Chinese did not pick the day of the clash, they had prepared for a confrontation--one that would demonstrate Chinese unity and determination in the face of Soviet intimidation.

The Soviet Response, March-June 1969

The Kremlin responded to the March 2 incident by continuing its effort to isolate China politically and pressure the Chinese

* It is also unlikely that the Kremlin would have provoked a clash while Soviet Defense Minister Grechko was out of the country visiting India and Pakistan. Indeed, the Chinese may have timed the incident to take advantage of his absence and to demonstrate Beijing's refusal to be intimidated by Soviet efforts to encircle China.⁷¹

militarily. In doing so, the Soviets hoped to force Beijing to settle their differences with Moscow on Soviet terms and keep the U.S. and China apart.

After March 2, Moscow heightened its military pressure on China. The Soviet protest note warned the Chinese of the "possible consequences" of their "adventuristic" policy.⁷⁸ The Chinese were also reminded of the readiness of Soviet rocket forces and the military lesson taught the nationalists in 1929.⁷⁹ Soviet military and naval forces in the Far East were alerted.*⁸⁰ Air reconnaissance and satellite coverage of the border area were stepped up.⁸⁴ The Kremlin also matched the Chinese popular demonstrations with ones of their own.⁸⁵

Both the Soviets and Chinese intensified their military preparations in the Chenpao vicinity, and on March 15 the Soviets struck back.** Reportedly, a small battle broke out involving Soviet tanks, armored cars, artillery, and infantry. Soviet aircraft may have been on the scene but did not participate in the fighting. The Chinese fought

* In a rare comment on Soviet naval movements, Navy Chief Sergei Gorshkov denied a Western report in March that a large naval squadron was being sent to the Pacific in response to the Ussuri crisis.⁸¹ In effect, the Soviets were taking advantage of the report to underline their restraint to China, and particularly the West, and to warn China that they could augment their naval forces, if they wished. The Chinese apparently responded by moving naval assets from south China to the north.⁸² Indeed, it was probably only a small comfort to Beijing that the squadron sailed to the Mediterranean. The Chinese generally characterized the Soviet naval presence there as a threat to Albania, China's ally.⁸³

** Significantly, TASS announced on that day that Grechko had returned to the Soviet Union.⁸⁶

back with artillery, mortars, and anti-tank weapons. After the battle, the Chinese apparently controlled the island. In April, action shifted to Xinjiang, where Chinese control was weak and where the Soviets enjoyed troop and logistical superiority.* Incidents were recorded on April 16, 17 and 25 near the Dzungarian Gate, the classic invasion route into China. And in May, clashes occurred along both the eastern and western sectors of the border.⁸⁸

At the same time, the Kremlin stepped up its activities to isolate China. In the Communist world, the Soviets, at a conference in Budapest, tried to gain Warsaw Pact condemnation of Chinese aggression. It was also reported that the Soviets wanted to send some Pact troops to the Chinese border. These suggestions were resisted by Romania.**⁸⁹ Events on the Ussuri may have given the Kremlin an additional reason to tidy up matters left over from the invasion of Czechoslovakia. On March 31, Grechko arrived unexpectedly in Czechoslovakia and demanded that Prague cease internal debate, restore censorship of the press, and strengthen its security forces.⁹¹ In mid-April, the liberal Dubcek was ousted in favor of the conservative Gustav Husak as first secretary of the party.⁹²

* In their propaganda, the Soviets emphasized the disorders of the Cultural Revolution in Xinjiang and the resistance of the minorities there to Maoist rule.⁸⁷

** Relations between Beijing and Bucharest improved dramatically after Romania condemned the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. China also improved relations with Yugoslavia in early 1969 for similar reasons.⁹⁰

Towards the West, Moscow launched a diplomatic offensive to forestall any improvement in relations between Western countries and China. Soviet envoys warned the United States, Japan, West Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Great Britain, and Canada that China was a threat to world peace and stability. In Bonn, the Soviets, demonstrating their inordinate fear of ties between West Germany and China, warned that the Federal Republic should not strengthen its profitable economic links with Beijing. To the Japanese, they continued to hold out the prospect of Tokyo's involvement in the development of Siberia's resources. In June, Moscow again launched a diplomatic initiative designed to discourage countries like Canada and Italy from pursuing plans to recognize Beijing.⁹³

The Soviets were especially anxious to keep the U.S. and China apart. As we have seen, Moscow may have thought initially that the March 2 incident was instigated by Mao and Zhou to override Lin's objections to an opening to the U.S. Soon after the event, Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin insisted on giving National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger Moscow's version of the clash. Dobrynin also claimed that "China was everyone's problem." (Furthermore, Hanoi warned the U.S. that it would be useless to exploit the crisis with respect to the Vietnam war.) Moscow also moved to reduce tensions with the U.S. On March 5, the Federal Presidential election was held in West Berlin without incident despite Soviet protests and previous East German harassment of access routes. Moscow continued to press for SALT negotiations, and Dobrynin

even suggested that the Soviet Union might recognize Taiwan as an independent country.⁹⁴

By improving relations with the U.S., Moscow could hope to reduce Washington's incentive for moving closer to Beijing while shoring up Lin's argument that the superpowers were colluding against China. For example, the Soviets reacted mildly to a U.S. military exercise in the region that began on March 17. Focus Retina involved bringing elements of the 82nd Airborne to South Korea in the "longest airlift in history."⁹⁵ Rather than see it in the context of the U.S. airlift to Europe and other NATO exercises of late 1968 and early 1969 in reaction to the Czech invasion, Moscow merely described it as provocative to North Korea.⁹⁶ The Chinese, on the other hand, maintained an uneasy silence, unable to agree on whether or not the exercise represented superpower collusion.* However, when Soviet ships helped search for survivors of the EC-121 shot down by North Koreans in April, the Chinese condemned the effort as U.S.-Soviet collusion.⁹⁸ Indeed, Moscow's restrained naval response to U.S. carrier deployments near Korea probably reinforced the appearance of collusion in Beijing.⁹⁹

* In fact, Beijing does not seem to have commented on U.S. and NATO exercises in response to the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Curiously, they did denounce a U.S. carrier deployment to the Black Sea in February as evidence of collusion.⁹⁷ This suggests that Beijing's attitude toward U.S. and allied exercises was a matter of debate. The leadership may have been able to reach agreement on the Black Sea deployment only because it was opposed by Turkish students.

The Soviets coupled a policy of political and military pressure with overtures for negotiations. Shortly after the March 15 incident, Kosygin telephoned Beijing seeking a settlement of Soviet and Chinese differences. On March 26, the Kremlin sent a note to the Chinese embassy calling for a resumption of border negotiations broken off in 1964. Later, the Soviets proposed April 15 for beginning the talks. Feeling the pressure, the Chinese agreed in early May to the resumption of river navigation talks suggested by Moscow on April 26. However, these were not the wider border talks the Kremlin had campaigned for. So the Soviets pressed their advantage.¹⁰⁰

Moscow continued its military buildup. Soviet ground forces increased from approximately 24 divisions to almost 30. Divisions in the eastern military districts were brought up to strength, and support units were deployed. In June and July, the Trans-Siberian railroad was closed to civilian traffic. In late May and June, the Soviets conducted an extensive military exercise involving the rapid deployment of troops and aircraft from the western Soviet Union to the east. The Pacific Fleet, which was more than a match for the Chinese Navy, no doubt participated in the exercise as well. Moreover, Soviet satellites began to take extra interest in Chinese nuclear facilities, and Soviet bombers redeployed in the exercise practiced attacks against them.¹⁰¹

The Kremlin accompanied these military measures with additional political pressure on China. The Soviets pressed their case against

China at the International Party Conference in June. They also stepped up their political activities on China's periphery. Soviet President Podgorny travelled to North Korea and Mongolia in May, while Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin visited India, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Kosygin's visit to South Asia was followed by reports of a Soviet proposal for a regional conference in Kabul. Iran and Nepal were also mentioned as possible conference participants. In June, Brezhnev proposed an Asian "collective security system"—designed to line up countries like India, Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan against China. The Kremlin was also gratified to hear in June that the U.S. was prepared to begin arms limitation talks.¹⁰²

The Chinese were concerned. In early June, Beijing complained about a serious clash with the Soviet Union. The Zhongnanhai also denounced the Soviet military buildup, and for the first time, publicly charged the Soviets with provoking other incidents in Xinjiang and elsewhere along the border in April and May. Beijing also claimed that Soviet bombers, fighters, helicopters, and reconnaissance planes had frequently violated China's airspace between the end of March and June. And during the International Party conference, China supported the criticisms of the Soviet Union by Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia. The Zhongnanhai probably feared that the Soviets would press their Warsaw Pact allies at the conference to station troops on China's border. Beijing was no doubt relieved when the conference failed to condemn China. But the Soviets kept up the pressure. In

early July, the Chinese complained that Soviet patrols, gunboats, and aircraft intruded into Chinese territory around Pacha island in the Amur river area around Khabarovsk, provoking an armed conflict.¹⁰³

The American Factor, June-August 1969

While the Soviets were trying to use the U.S. in pressuring China, Washington became increasingly interested in improving its position relative to both communist powers. As Henry Kissinger admits in his memoirs, the new administration gave a cool reception to Beijing's overtures in early 1969. However, the administration's interest was stimulated in early February by reports of East European concern about a Sino-American rapprochement. The White House decided to keep speculation alive by planting rumors that the U.S. was studying the possibility. However, after a nervous Dobrynin gave the Soviet account of the March 2 incident, the White House saw a real possibility to exploit the situation. As Kissinger put it:

The opportunity was that China might be ready to reenter the diplomatic arena and that would require it to soften its previous hostility toward the United States. In such circumstances, the Chinese threat against many of our friends in Asia would decline; at the same time, by evoking the Soviet Union's concerns along its long Asian perimeter, it could also ease pressure on Europe.¹⁰⁴

The White House began to take a more active interest in the Sino-Soviet rivalry. In April, the U.S. ambassador to Moscow informed the

Kremlin that Washington would not exploit Soviet troubles with China, implying that the administration could if it wished. The Soviets got the message. In May, the Kremlin vowed that it would not exploit Washington's troubles with Beijing and that U.S.-Soviet relations should be based on "long-range considerations." When the Soviets tried to discourage Western countries like Canada and Italy from establishing relations with China, the U.S. secretly began to encourage them to do so. At the same time, the Sino-Soviet clashes in Xinjiang, where Moscow enjoyed a disproportionate military advantage, convinced the administration that the Soviet Union was largely responsible for the crisis.¹⁰⁵

In late June, the U.S. began to make overt moves to bring about a rapprochement with China. Partly in reaction to Moscow's failure to respond to Washington's offer to begin SALT negotiations, Nixon added a stop in Romania on a trip to Asia. The significance of the visit was not lost on the Soviets. Brezhnev and Kosygin refused to attend the Romanian party conference rescheduled to accommodate the visit. On July 21, just before Nixon's Asian trip, the State Department eased restrictions on trade and travel to China. On his trip, Nixon made frequent hints of Washington's interest in a rapprochement with China. In Pakistan and Romania, he sought the help of Yahya Khan and Nicolai Ceausescu in establishing a line of communications with Beijing.* After President Nixon returned to the United States, Secretary of State Rogers

* Pakistan and China continued close relations despite Soviet efforts to woo Islamabad.

made a major speech in Australia on August 8, declaring Washington's desire for improved relations with Beijing. However, nothing was heard from the Zhongnanhai.*¹⁰⁶

By August, the Kremlin was determined to resolve the crisis. Although the U.S. had agreed to begin arms discussions, Moscow was disturbed by Washington's overtures to Beijing. The Soviets charged that the U.S. was exploiting the crisis.¹⁰⁷ With the U.S. committed to beginning arms discussions, the Soviets could afford to delay. In this way, the Kremlin could preserve the appearance of colluding with the U.S. while pressuring Washington to choose Moscow over Beijing.

In turn, the Soviets moved to end the crisis on Moscow's terms before the U.S. and China could improve relations. On the day of Roger's speech, the Soviets and Chinese concluded a river navigation agreement.¹⁰⁸ However, the agreement did not signal improved Sino-Soviet relations as most Western observers thought, but rather the beginning of additional pressure on Beijing. Five days later on August 13, there was a serious clash between Soviet and Chinese forces near the Dzungarian Gate.¹⁰⁹ Although both countries blamed the other for the clash, the location of the incident, even in the Soviet account, was clearly inside China.¹¹⁰ By late August, the Soviets were probing the scope of a U.S. reaction to an attack on Chinese nuclear facili-

* Yet, three days after Washington eased trade and travel restrictions with China, the Chinese released two American yachtsmen who had been shipwrecked off the south China coast.

ties.¹¹¹ They were also feeling out their allies in Eastern Europe on the same subject.¹¹² Soviet threats in the press intensified: the Chinese were warned to cease their provocations or war might engulf the world; pointed references were made to the Red Army's rapid victory over the Japanese in 1945; the possibility of a Soviet strike against Chinese nuclear facilities was mentioned by Victor Louis in mid-September.¹¹³ Soviet military moves reinforced these threats. There was a standdown of Soviet aircraft in August.¹¹⁴ In this way, they could be prepared for a sudden attack.

Washington Reacts, September 1969

The White House was concerned. In the early 1960s, the U.S. had seriously considered an attack on China's atomic development sites. The Kremlin might believe that the U.S. would acquiesce in a Soviet strike, or even an invasion of Chinese territory. In turn, the Chinese might believe that the Soviet overtures represented further collusion between Washington and Moscow. At a National Security Council meeting on August 14, Nixon stated that the U.S. could not allow China to be "smashed." On August 25, Kissinger initiated a study of U.S. policy options in the event of a Sino-Soviet war. On August 27, CIA Director Richard Helms briefed press correspondents regarding Washington's fear of a Soviet attack on Chinese atomic facilities. It was also revealed that the National Security Council was studying how the U.S. should react to a war between the Soviet Union and China. And on September 5,

Under Secretary of State Eliot Richardson publicly announced that the U.S. opposed the "escalation of this quarrel into a massive breach of international peace and security." As Kissinger put it:

It was another revolutionary step for the United States to take such public note of a threat against a country with which it had been in posture of hostility for twenty years and with which it had had no kind of exchange since the advent of the new Administration.¹¹⁵

The Chinese Blink, September-October 1969

The Chinese felt the pressure. As early as July, Beijing was predicting an attack by October. Yet the Zhongnanhai did not match the Soviet military buildup with one of their own. Although some main-force units and aircraft along the border were relocated, there was no major redeployment of main-force units. Rather, emphasis was placed on intensified militia training, new formations of paramilitary production and construction units, storage of foodstuffs, and continued testing of nuclear devices. Chinese military and naval forces also heightened their readiness posture. Indeed, just after the Soviet Far East exercise in June and the military clash in August, the Chinese apparently conducted joint air and sea exercises near the Bohai Gulf. However, the PLA remained deployed to counter both the U.S. and Soviet Union. The Zhongnanhai apparently feared that a major force redeployment would provoke Moscow and encourage U.S. aggressiveness in the south.¹¹⁶

Unable to respond to Soviet threats as tensions increased in August and September, the Chinese moved to defuse the crisis. On September 11, Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin, at China's invitation, stopped in Beijing after attending Ho Chi Minh's funeral.* And on October 7, Beijing agreed to border talks at the Deputy Foreign Minister level. Thus, Moscow had finally pressured the Chinese to reopen the talks suspended since 1964.¹¹⁸

A Pyrrhic Victory, October-December 1969

The Soviet victory was a pyrrhic one. Moscow had acted to prevent a rapprochement between the U.S. and China. They had also hoped that pressure would produce a leadership in Beijing amenable to Moscow. Just after the Zhou-Kosygin meeting, rumors of Mao's death began emanating from Moscow.¹¹⁹ The Soviets probably believed that Mao could not have approved of the meeting and that no meaningful improvement in Sino-Soviet relations could take place without his removal from the scene. If so, they were right. For Moscow's actions had laid the foundation for a rapprochement between Washington and Beijing.

* Before the Soviet delegation arrived, Zhou Enlai made a hasty visit to Hanoi to pay China's respects.¹¹⁷ It is possible that Zhou asked the Vietnamese to lay the groundwork for Kosygin's acceptance of an invitation to Beijing. However, the invitation itself was issued at the last minute, causing Kosygin's plane to change its course from Moscow to Beijing. In keeping with China's imperial tradition, the Soviets were cleverly maneuvered into coming to the Chinese in quest of improved relations.

The Chinese took note of Washington's timely support in the crisis. On October 10, three days after Beijing agreed to talk, Pakistan indicated that the Chinese had been informed of U.S. willingness to improve relations and wanted something more specific to convey to the Zhongnanhai. The U.S. then quietly gave up its destroyer patrol of the Taiwan Straits. The decision was leaked to Chinese officials in Hong Kong around November 26.¹²⁰

Zhou Enlai and the other moderates had gained the upper hand. Earlier in the year, they had succeeded in reducing China's isolation by reposting ambassadors to some of the countries with which China had relations. Now, they were able to respond to American gestures. In early December, Beijing released two other Americans whose boat had wandered into Chinese waters in early 1969. The same month, the U.S. ambassador in Warsaw was given an unprecedented invitation to visit the Chinese embassy. Soon afterwards, the visit was returned by the ranking Chinese official in Warsaw. In early January, it was announced that the Warsaw talks would begin later in the month.¹²¹

Lin Biao was losing the debate. The Soviet Union was now considered the primary threat. The Chinese began responding to the Soviet military buildup with one of their own. In late 1969, the Chinese began a major redeployment of main-force units from south to north China.¹²² In view of Washington's overtures, the moderates were able to argue that the military threat from the U.S. had diminished.

Indeed, they may have argued that those very overtures had helped restrain the Soviets from attacking China. Moscow then was not likely to respond forcefully to a Chinese buildup because Washington might exploit the situation to advance U.S. interests. Furthermore, the Soviets were not likely to react for fear of jeopardizing the border negotiations.

These considerations may have influenced Soviet policy. On October 20, the day the border negotiations began, Dobrynin informed the White House that Moscow was ready to begin SALT discussions. The Kremlin probably still hoped that arms negotiations would revive Chinese fears of U.S.-Soviet collusion while encouraging Washington to move closer to Moscow. Yet Dobrynin also warned the U.S. President against exploiting Sino-Soviet tensions. Nixon replied that his China policy was not aimed at the Soviet Union, but the U.S. intended to continue efforts at improving U.S.-China relations. Nevertheless, the Soviets, perhaps fearing that further clashes would only drive China and the U.S. closer together, pursued efforts to improve relations with both countries.*¹²³

* In a meeting in the Soviet Union in 1973, Brezhnev, according to Kissinger, tacitly asked U.S. permission for a preemptive Soviet attack on China. Brezhnev went on to say any U.S. military assistance to China would lead to war. Kissinger indicated that Washington was opposed to an attack on China. So, on his visit to the United States later that year, Brezhnev assured President Nixon that the Soviet Union would not attack China. However, a military agreement between the U.S. and China "would confuse the issue." Brezhnev's statements indicate that Moscow feared in 1969 that a Soviet action against China would only drive Washington and Beijing closer together.¹²⁴

But the damage had been done. The Zhongnanhai had time to build up its forces in north China and lay the groundwork for President Nixon's visit to China in 1972. Shortly afterwards, the U.S. and Soviet Union signed the first SALT treaty. The U.S. was now at the center of a new triangular relationship.

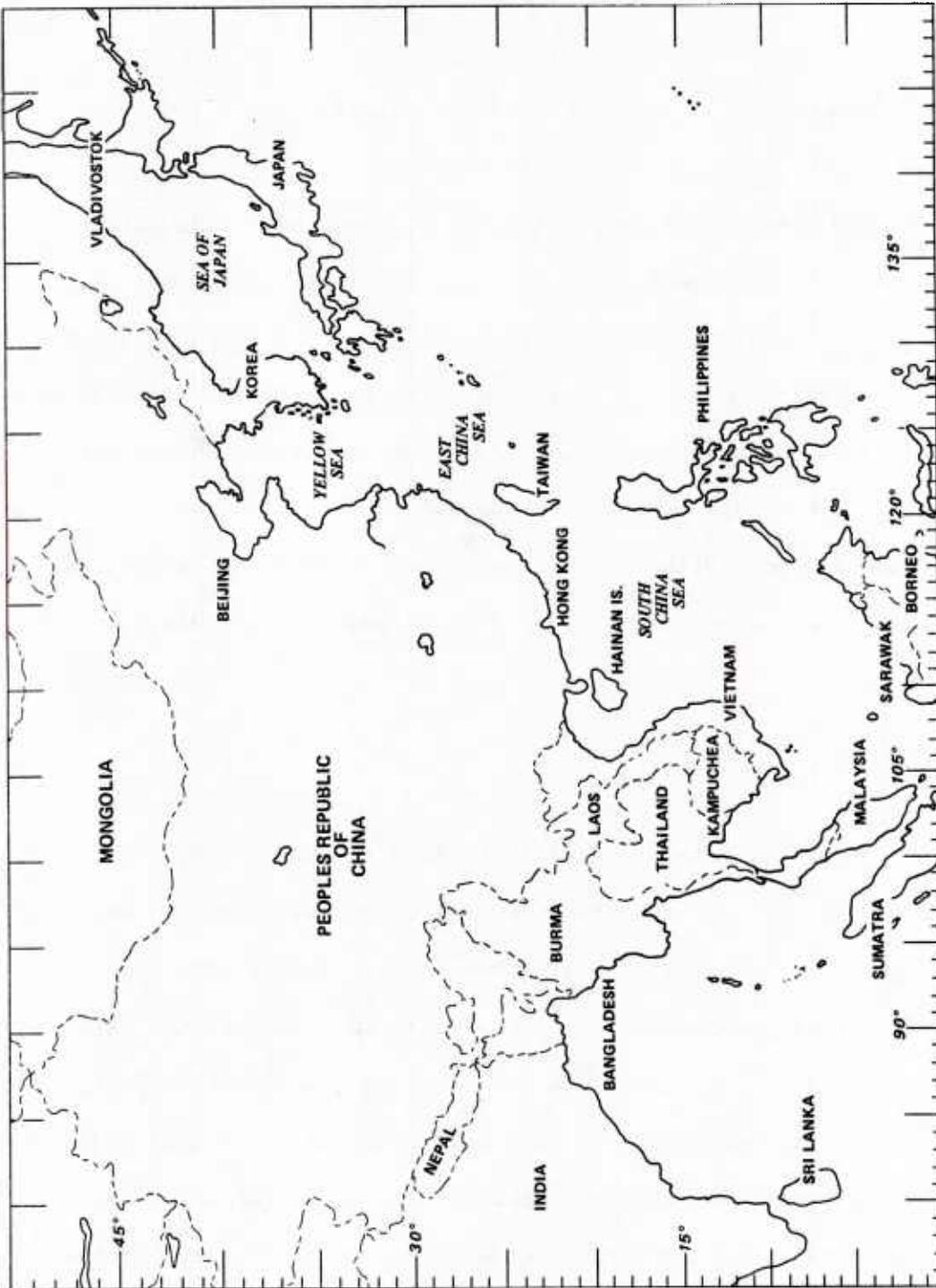


FIG. 3: CHINA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

FRIENDSHIP PASSED: THE SINO-VIETNAMESE BORDER WAR OF 1979

THE GEOPOLITICAL CONTEST, DECEMBER 1977-JANUARY 1979

Since 1969, the Soviets and Chinese have moved away from direct confrontations to proxy conflicts. However, like the Ussuri crisis, the Sino-Vietnamese border war of 1979 was an outgrowth of intense Soviet and Chinese efforts to gain or deny support to each other. Along with the countries of South and Southeast Asia, the United States and its Japanese and NATO allies were prizes as well as participants in the competition. In considering this geopolitical contest, it is necessary to start with the Soviet Union, whose actions made it possible.

The Soviet Factor, Fall, 1977

After the Ussuri crisis, the Soviet Union sought to prevent its encirclement and advance its interests by keeping apart its two most powerful opponents--the United States and China. Moscow continued efforts to disrupt growing ties between Washington and Beijing. After President Nixon's trip to China was announced in the summer of 1971, Moscow signed a friendship treaty with New Delhi and encouraged India to invade East Pakistan. After Nixon visited Beijing in the winter of 1972, the Soviets supported North Vietnam's spring offensive. In this way, the Kremlin tried to demonstrate that Soviet power could not be contained by a relationship between Washington and Beijing. However,

these efforts failed to prevent the U.S. and China from drawing closer together. In the Indo-Pakistan War, the U.S. helped China support Pakistan by dispatching a carrier task group to the Indian Ocean. Moscow was forced to counsel India against following up its victory in East Pakistan with an attack in the West. During North Vietnam's spring offensive, China adopted a neutral stance while the U.S. bombed Hanoi and mined Haiphong's harbor. The Soviets were forced to limit their response to a weak show of naval force in the South China Sea and to pressure Hanoi to make peace with Washington.¹²⁵

Since 1969, the Soviets also pursued detente with the U.S. while seeking improved relations with Beijing. Moscow's efforts at detente with Washington yielded notable successes, particularly the SALT I Treaty of 1972. However, by the mid-seventies, efforts to improve relations with China stumbled on Soviet insistence that the territorial dispute between them be settled on the basis of the status quo,* and on the failure of Soviet attempts in the early seventies to intimidate the

* The dispute involves disagreements over interpretation of what the Chinese call "unequal treaties" concluded by previous Chinese governments with Imperial and Soviet Russia. The territory in question is actually quite small, but Beijing insists that Moscow recognize the treaties as unequal. The Kremlin refuses to do so. Such an admission would be a confession that the Soviet Union is an imperialist power and perhaps open the way for additional Chinese territorial claims. Since 1974, the Chinese have deemphasized this demand. However, as prelude to successful negotiations, the Chinese also insist that Soviet troops be withdrawn from Mongolia and that Soviet forces be pulled back from the common border and their numbers reduced. Moscow maintains that a relaxation of its military posture can come only as a result of successful negotiations. The Chinese retort that the Soviet position is a violation of Kosygin's promises to Zhou Enlai at their famous meeting in 1969. The Soviets deny that promises of that type were made.¹²⁶

Chinese with improvements in the USSR's military posture in the Far East.¹²⁷

In lieu of a settlement with Beijing, Moscow sought to contain China's international influence by portraying China as an aggressive nation, selling its idea for an Asian collective security system, and improving its relations with potential friends and enemies of Beijing--the U.S., Japan, Europe, India, and Vietnam. Moscow also continued its military buildup. By 1978, there were 44-45 Soviet divisions deployed along or near the China border. Moreover, the Soviets continued to improve the quality of their equipment and to introduce their most modern weapon systems--like the SS-20 missile--to the region.¹²⁸

This policy was relatively successful--not so much on its own merits but as a result of a relative lack of challenge from Beijing. Despite the end of the Cultural Revolution and the opening to the United States, China remained isolated. After the fall of Lin Biao in 1971, the moderates led by Zhou Enlai and the rehabilitated Deng Xiaoping were in the ascendency. They did have some success in expanding China's contacts with the West and the Third World. In his "Three Worlds" speech at the United Nations in 1974, Deng even indicated China's willingness to combine with other countries to counter-encircle the Soviet Union. In 1975, China persuaded Thailand, the Philippines, and Kampuchea (but not Vietnam) to sign "anti-hegemony" statements aimed against the USSR. Even so, the ability of the moderates to implement

their domestic and foreign policies was constrained by the opposition of the radicals led by Jiang Qing. And Deng was purged soon after Zhou died in January 1976. Thus, Chinese isolation continued as Mao, encouraged by the even more radical "Gang of Four" sought to preserve the purity of the Chinese communist model.¹²⁹

However, in the fall of 1977, the Kremlin found itself in a favorable position to advance its interests vis-a-vis China and the United States--both of its adversaries had new and untried governments. The death of Mao in September 1976 and the ensuing power struggle opened opportunities for the Soviet Union to improve its relations with Beijing on favorable terms.* In addition, the new Carter administration, inaugurated in January 1977, favored the conclusion of a SALT II agreement over improved relations with Beijing.¹³² Thus, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance's visit to China in late August ended in disagreement over the usefulness of arms limitation agreements with the Soviet Union and over the seriousness of the Soviet threat.¹³³

With China and the U.S. at odds, the Kremlin was quick to exploit its opportunity. In September, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko's trip to Washington ended in the announcement of a major breakthrough in SALT II negotiations, and in October Vance and Gromyko agreed to recon-

* By the summer of 1977, the Soviets identified a three-way power struggle in China involving Deng Xiaoping, Ye Jianying, and Hua Guofeng.¹³⁰ However, as time passed, the Soviets tended to emphasize a two-way struggle involving Deng and Hua.¹³¹

vene the Geneva Conference on a Middle East peace settlement under U.S. and Soviet auspices--a major objective of Moscow's Mideast policy.¹³⁴ Toward China, in October, the Kremlin made a major appeal for a normalization of relations in a TASS article under the I. Aleksandrov pseudonym.¹³⁵ There were a flurry of official Soviet and Chinese contacts: the Soviet and Chinese ambassadors to Japan met in Tokyo; the Chinese ambassador to Moscow met successively with the Secretary of the Supreme Soviet, Gromyko, and finally Kosygin.¹³⁶ In their confidence, the Soviets warned the U.S. that any attempts to improve relations with China at Moscow's expense would backfire because

...normalization and improvement of [Sino-Soviet] relations are in the long-term interests of both the Chinese and Soviet people....Chinese leaders will be compelled to embark on the road of reassessing the foreign policy values of Mao Zedong and of looking for a more reasonable approach to pressing international problems. And, in searching for a more reasonable approach, they will inevitably face the need to improve relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries....¹³⁷

However, the Soviets were not only interested in improving their relations but also their geopolitical position vis-a-vis the United States and China. In late November, Moscow intervened in the Somali-Ethiopian War when their efforts to form a socialist federation in the Horn at U.S. expense collapsed and when Sadat's trip to Jerusalem frustrated their hopes of reconvening a Geneva conference.¹³⁸ To spur the "inevitable," Moscow also pressured (what the Soviets probably saw as) a divided Chinese leadership by further increasing its sense of isolation

and vulnerability. In December, Vietnam invaded Kampuchea and seized most of Svay Rieng province in hopes of pressuring the Pol Pot government or a successor to improve its relations with Hanoi.¹³⁹ The Chinese duly noted that increased Vietnamese military pressure on Kampuchea, a Chinese client, began in November after Hanoi's Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh left Moscow.¹⁴⁰ And at the expense of both China and the U.S., the Soviets pressed the Japanese to conclude a Treaty of Friendship and Good Neighborliness in January 1978.¹⁴¹

The Chinese Factor, January-February 1978

The Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea and the Soviet intervention in Ethiopia alarmed Beijing. The Chinese saw the two events as a Soviet effort to dominate both ends of the Indian Ocean, weaken the Western alliance's security of access to Mideast oil, and encircle China. In response, Chinese leaders, whatever their differences over economic, political and social policies, seemed determined to break out of their isolation and forge an anti-Soviet coalition.¹⁴² In January, an elaboration in Peoples Daily of Hua Guofeng's "Three Worlds" speech at the Eleventh CCP Congress emphasized that China would oppose Soviet "social imperialism" by strengthening its international ties.¹⁴³

To that end, the Chinese set out to improve their relations along China's periphery.* Deng Xiaoping visited Burma and Nepal in January, announced support for the foreign policies of Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and indicated that China desired better relations with India.¹⁴⁴ Zhou Enlai's widow, Deng Yingchao, visited Kampuchea that same month, and shortly afterwards Phnom Penh began discussions with Bangkok designed to improve relations with Thailand.¹⁴⁵ Thereafter, Kampuchea showed more willingness to end its isolation and improve its brutal reputation. By March, Chinese officials were emphasizing their support for ASEAN, and at the end of the month, Thailand's Premier Kriangsak Chamanand visited Beijing.¹⁴⁶

The Chinese did not neglect their relations with the West and Japan. The Chinese were interested in purchasing Western arms. In January, French Premier Raymond Barre visited Beijing, initiating a series of Sino-European contacts that would eventually lead to some Western arms sales to China--sales the Soviets bitterly opposed.¹⁴⁷ In February, Beijing concluded a long-term trade agreement with Japan, and continued their long-term efforts to sign a peace treaty with the Japanese that included an anti-hegemony clause aimed at the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁸ The Hong Kong Communist Press also lauded Ambassador Leonard Woodcock's statement in Washington calling for normalization of relations with China.¹⁴⁹

* They also began supplying weapons to Somali forces fighting Soviet-backed Ethiopia.

The Soviets Decide to Bully, March-May 1978

By February, Moscow's efforts to improve its position vis-a-vis China and the United States were meeting setbacks. Underlining their displeasure with Tokyo, the Soviets published that month the "Good Neighbor" Treaty the Japanese had rejected earlier.¹⁵⁰ Tokyo argued that clauses in the draft would undermine its mutual security treaty with the United States and any efforts to conclude a peace treaty with China.¹⁵¹ The Japanese also stated that the draft could not substitute for a peace treaty which would satisfy Japanese claims to the northern islands occupied by the Soviet Union since World War II.¹⁵²

In turn, the United States, alarmed by Soviet intervention in Ethiopia, began to make noises about linking detente to Soviet geopolitical behavior.¹⁵³ Nor were the Soviets likely to be pleased with Woodcock's call for normalization of relations with China or Secretary of Defense Harold Brown's assertion in late February that, despite the pullback in Korea, the U.S. would improve its military posture in the Asian-Pacific region.¹⁵⁴

Indeed, military cooperation between the U.S. and Japan reached an all-time high in 1978. This was presaged by the annual "Team Spirit" exercises involving U.S.-ROK forces in March 1978. U.S. aircraft carriers and other units of the Seventh Fleet and some 30,000 U.S. troops participated in Team Spirit. These exercises were not only

significantly larger than in previous years,* but also free American use of Japanese bases for the exercises were vigorously defended by the Japanese government in the face of domestic criticism. In April, ships of the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force undertook exercises with elements of the U.S. Seventh Fleet, including an aircraft carrier. Both events were an important show of increased Japanese support for the mutual security treaty--a treaty, as Moscow well knew, that had Beijing's support.¹⁵⁶

If all this were not enough, on March 9 China rejected the Soviet Union's February 24 note calling for a "joint statement on the principles of mutual relations."¹⁵⁷ Again underlining its displeasure, Moscow published the note on March 23. Phnom Penh also spurned Vietnam's proposals for settlement of their border conflict.¹⁵⁸

A series of incidents suggest that the Soviets decided to resort increasingly to intimidation to gain their ends. In a strong signal of support for Hanoi, the Kremlin sent General Ivan Pavlovskiy, Commander-in-Chief of Soviet ground forces, on a surprise visit to neighboring Laos--which had signed a friendship treaty with Vietnam in the summer of 1977.¹⁵⁹ Indeed, Moscow reportedly urged Vietnam to overthrow the Kampuchea government by force.¹⁶⁰ The Vietnamese were not yet ready to take the advice, but a secret Central Committee meeting in February did

* Two Soviet destroyers, an intelligence collector, and a support ship observed the exercise throughout.¹⁵⁵

decide that the Pol Pot government had to go--by politico-military means preferably, by force majeure, if necessary.¹⁶¹ As a result, Sino-Vietnamese relations also deteriorated. In March, the first incidents along the Sino-Vietnamese border were reported, and Hanoi began to make the first moves against ethnic Chinese in Vietnam.¹⁶² In April, fighting along the Kampuchean border intensified.¹⁶³ Furthermore, in mid-March, about the time a Japanese military official visited China, two Soviet warships lingered in the Tsuguru Strait, to Tokyo's annoyance.¹⁶⁴ Later that month, a Tu-95 violation of Japan's airspace drew a Japanese protest.¹⁶⁵ In late March and early April, Brezhnev toured the Soviet Far East. During the tour he visited Khabarovsk, where he watched a military exercise near the scene of some of the clashes in 1969, and Vladivostok where he watched a naval exercise aboard the cruiser Admiral Senyavin.¹⁶⁶ In early May, a small group of Soviet soldiers "mistook" Chinese territory for their own--creating one of the more serious border incidents since 1969.¹⁶⁷ The Chinese and Japanese found these events disturbing.

At the same time, Moscow held out the olive branch. The Soviets were anxious to continue negotiations with the U.S. on SALT, and Vance won some concessions from them on a trip to Moscow in April.¹⁶⁸ In the spring, a high-level Soviet delegation visited Japan and again broached the subject of the draft treaty with little success.¹⁶⁹ On April 26, Deputy Foreign Minister Leonid Ilyichev, head of the Soviet delegation at the Sino-Soviet border talks, returned to Beijing after an absence of

nine months.¹⁷⁰ Yet, border negotiations continued to stumble over the issue of the withdrawal of Soviet troops—just as the dialogue in the the Soviet and Chinese press foreshadowed.¹⁷¹ Indeed, the futility of the talks quickly became apparent. On the day Ilyichev arrived, the White House announced that National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski would visit Beijing in late May.¹⁷²

The American Factor, May 1978

Soviet intervention in Ethiopia not only delayed the completion of a SALT accord but also persuaded a reluctant Carter administration to respond to Soviet activism by drawing closer to China.¹⁷³ Secretary of State Vance reportedly opposed the visit on the grounds that it would exacerbate relations with the Soviet Union.¹⁷⁴ However, Soviet and Cuban involvement in the Katangan invasion of Zaire's Shaba province strengthened Brzezinski's hand in pressing for normalization.¹⁷⁵ On the day of his arrival, the Chinese signalled Brzezinski's welcome by hinting in the Hong Kong press that China would pursue reunification with Taiwan by peaceful means.¹⁷⁶ The National Security Advisor, in turn, was careful not to visit Taiwan in a tour of the Far East that also included Japan and South Korea.¹⁷⁷ In Beijing, the "polar bear" was the primary topic of conversation.¹⁷⁸ In a move calculated to discomfit the Soviets, Brzezinski informed the Chinese that the U.S. was dropping its opposition to European arms sales to China.¹⁷⁹ Brzezinski also laid the basis for normalization discussions and publicly approved

the conclusion of a Sino-Japanese peace treaty.*¹⁸⁰ Soon afterwards, the Japanese announced that they would resume negotiating in July.¹⁸² The Hong Kong Communist Press, in turn, predicted the normalization of U.S.-China relations in January or February 1979.¹⁸³

The Chinese no doubt were pleased because as the situation deteriorated with the Vietnamese, Beijing was anxious to expand its international support. In May, the Chinese not only met with Brzezinski, but Party Chairman Hua Guofeng made an unprecedented visit outside China to North Korea.¹⁸⁴ Diplomatic relations were established with Oman and later with Libya.¹⁸⁵ Chinese efforts in May to woo South Yemen's President Salim Rubai Ali away from Moscow were only interrupted by his death in a pro-Soviet coup in late June.¹⁸⁶ (And the appearance of Iran on Hua's itinerary in August may have been related to Chinese concern over the establishment of a pro-Soviet government in Afghanistan in April.)¹⁸⁷ By early June, the mass exodus of ethnic Chinese from Vietnam and Hanoi's air and military strikes against Kampuchea prompted Beijing to end its economic support to Laos and Vietnam.¹⁸⁸ Both China and Vietnam were improving their military posture on their common border.¹⁸⁹

* Apparent Chinese efforts in April to pressure Tokyo for a settlement by sending fishing trawlers to dramatize Chinese claims to the Senkaku Islands delayed negotiations to conclude the treaty. The Chinese government tactfully claimed that the incident was a spontaneous demonstration.¹⁸¹

The Soviets Bully Some More, June-August 1978

To deal with the ominous geopolitical situation developing against them, the Soviets continued to improve their ties with Vietnam while seeking to disrupt growing U.S. and Japanese ties with China. In June, Moscow reportedly gained access to Cam Ranh Bay and Haiphong Harbor for their warships, and Hanoi joined the Council of Economic and Mutual Assistance. The Soviets also stepped up their military assistance to Vietnam. Indeed, the Chinese accused Vietnam of acquiring Soviet missiles that could strike China.¹⁹⁰

To signal their displeasure, the Soviets increased the frequency of military exercises in the Soviet Far East in June and transformed their annual spring naval exercise into a show of strength against China and Japan. At the end of May, two Krestas, a Krivak, and a Kashin operated in a more southerly area of the Philippine Sea than customary. Beijing charged that this was an effort to intimidate China.* In mid-June, the Soviets, in an authoritative I. Aleksandrov article, accused China of making preparations for war. They also made a pointed reference to the Sino-Soviet clash in August 1969 at the height of the Ussuri crisis.¹⁹²

* In the Hong Kong Communist press, the Chinese also claimed that the "Soviet Union's strategic aim is to make arrangements in Vladivostok, Taiwan, Haiphong, and Cam Ranh Bay for forming an anti-China oceanic arc."¹⁹¹

In riposte, the Chinese improved their naval posture in the South China Sea and turned a chance visit to Hong Kong in June by the Enterprise into a show of U.S. support.* Representatives of the New China News Agency visited the ship while in port--an unprecedented event. The Soviet and Vietnamese media denounced the incident as evidence of American and Chinese collusion. And in July, the Soviets implied that the Chinese naval force buildup and air reconnaissance against Vietnam was reminiscent of Western-style "gunboat diplomacy."¹⁹⁴

Moscow also used its spring naval exercise to intimidate the Japanese. In June, the Soviet naval group swung northward and began operating near the Kurile Islands, claimed by Japan. Its operation there was highly significant in light of the firing exercise and unusual buildup of Soviet troops on Etorofu and Kunashiri Islands in late May and early June. The Soviets also officially protested the resumption of the Sino-Japanese treaty talks.¹⁹⁵

Like Beijing, Tokyo was concerned.¹⁹⁶ Again, it was to the U.S. that Japan looked for support. In part to reassure Tokyo, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown asserted in a speech that the U.S. did not recognize the Sea of Japan as a Soviet sanctuary.¹⁹⁷ Shortly afterward, a

* At the end of May, China's leaders also called on the PLA to build up its "combat strength" and "prepare against war" by modernizing its capabilities.¹⁹³

U.S. naval group led by the cruiser Fox was dispatched to the Seas of Japan and Okhotsk, where it drew Soviet interest.*¹⁹⁸

While brandishing the stick, the Kremlin continued to offer the carrot. In July, a Vance-Gromyko meeting in Geneva yielded an agreement in SALT II negotiations on the tricky issue of braking the advance of nuclear technology.²⁰⁰ Hanoi, in turn, dropped its demand for reconstruction aid, stepped up efforts to locate MIAs, and allowed Vietnamese dependents of U.S. citizens to travel to the U.S. in order to revive the moribund U.S.-Vietnam normalization talks.²⁰¹ The Vietnamese also sought economic aid from Japan, while protesting their peaceful intentions in Southeast Asia.²⁰²

Nevertheless, U.S. and Japanese negotiations with China moved swiftly forward. In August, Tokyo and Beijing concluded a peace agreement. Although Japan managed to include a clause that the treaty was not directed against third parties (the Soviet Union), the Chinese touted the agreement as a major victory in its antihegemony campaign against Moscow.²⁰³ In the meantime, China hinted that an American presence in Taiwan was preferable to a Soviet one.**²⁰⁴ The Chinese

* In September 1978, the Soviets reportedly brought up the idea of anti-submarine warfare and submarine free zones in the SALT II discussions.¹⁹⁹ Perhaps they were prompted to do so by Brown's speech and the Fox's cruise.

** Curiously, there were rumors in June that Victor Louis, the Soviet journalist who had caused a furor in 1968 by visiting Taiwan, wanted to visit the island again. But Taipei had rejected his application for a visa.²⁰⁵ Interestingly, the Hong Kong Communist press speculated that the Soviet naval exercises near Taiwan in May might have been meant, in part, to "bolster Chiang Ching-kuo."²⁰⁶ Thus, the Zhongnanhai may have been worried about a relationship developing between Moscow and Taipei.

indicated that they would not use force against the island, and they also made a number of friendly overtures to Taiwan for a reconciliation of their differences.²⁰⁷ The U.S., in turn, dropped its insistence on a public Chinese guarantee of the island's inviolability and blocked the sale of 60 F-4s to Taipei.²⁰⁸

The Soviets continued to express their anger. Moscow termed the Sino-Japanese treaty a military alliance, and Kosygin declared that the agreement represented an "historic mistake" on the part of Japan.²⁰⁹ The Kremlin also protested the visit to Japan of the Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army following the treaty's conclusion.²¹⁰ In retaliation, the Soviets suspended fishery negotiations with Japan and announced resumption of firing exercises in the Northern islands area.²¹¹ Moscow again proposed that Japan conclude a "good neighbor" treaty with the Soviet Union.²¹² As the Soviets grew more menacing, the Japanese press noted that the U.S. and Japan again held joint military exercises in the Fall.²¹³ Furthermore, the Japanese Self Defense Forces conducted the largest exercises in their history.²¹⁴

With regard to China, Moscow charged that Beijing was using its normalization discussions with the U.S. to block similar Vietnamese negotiations with Washington.²¹⁵ Soviet commentary during Hua Guofeng's highly publicized tour of Yugoslavia, Iran, and Romania following the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese treaty was particularly bitter.²¹⁶ (Indeed, Soviet pressure on Romania to increase its military contribution to the Warsaw Pact probably was directly related to Moscow's displeasure regarding the visit.)²¹⁷ Tensions also increased along the

Sino-Soviet border as the Kremlin increased its support for Vietnam.²¹⁸ And in late August, a serious incident along the Sino-Vietnamese border involving ethnic Chinese refugees combined with a less shrill and therefore more ominous tone in Beijing's warnings to Vietnam indicated a showdown was becoming inevitable.²¹⁹ In early September, Deng Xiaoping declared that Vietnam had joined the Soviet camp, and Beijing ended negotiations with Hanoi on the question of Chinese nationals in Vietnam.²²⁰ And as Hanoi prepared for an invasion of Kampuchea, the Chinese probably began planning their response.

Jockeying for Position, September-December 1978

As the crisis approached, China and the Soviet Union intensified their search for outside support. When Beijing tried to improve its relations with India, Moscow offered New Delhi an arms deal that included the first delivery of T-72 tanks outside of the Warsaw Pact.²²¹ When China scheduled Deng Xiaoping's visit to ASEAN countries in November, Vietnam's Premier Pham Van Dong insisted on visiting them in September.²²² Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Nikolai Firubin and Kampuchea's Foreign Minister Ieng Sary took similar tours in October.²²³ Sary also visited Japan that month, followed by the Vietnamese Foreign Minister in December.²²⁴

More ominously, Moscow and Beijing extended their treaty relationships. In October, Deng Xiaoping signed the peace treaty in Tokyo and

publicly endorsed Japan's security treaty with the United States.²²⁵ Washington and Beijing agreed to normalize their relations in December.²²⁶ Moscow's efforts since 1969 to form a collective security system in Asia took a step forward when the Soviets signed a Friendship and Cooperation Treaty with Vietnam in November and Afghanistan in December.²²⁷

Even more ominously, China and the Soviet Union were improving their military posture on the borders. China stepped up the buildup of its land, air, and naval forces on its border with Vietnam. On the Soviet border, Chinese forces were on increased alert. In December, the Soviets combined the Siberian, TransBaikal, and Far Eastern military districts under the command of Field Marshal Vasiley I. Petrov of Ethiopian fame. Such a command arrangement in the Far East had not been seen since World War II.²²⁸

In the meantime, increased Soviet arms shipments, especially in August, helped ready Vietnamese forces for action. In late November, Hanoi began softening up Pol Pot's forces with intense air and ground strikes into Kampuchea. And in early December, Vietnam formed the Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation (KNUFNS) and completed its plans for the invasion of Kampuchea.²²⁹

For Hanoi and Moscow, the invasion of Kampuchea satisfied separate but compatible goals. For Hanoi, it not only removed a troublesome

neighboring regime but sealed its domination of Indochina. To do that, Vietnam needed the Soviet Union's military and political support. It was needed for the military operation itself and to deter a Chinese reaction. For that support, Vietnam paid the political price of dependence on the Soviet Union.²³⁰

For Moscow, the invasion was a part of its China policy in particular and its geopolitical policy in general. To contain China, the Soviets need to bear the military and economic cost of supporting Vietnam.²³¹ The invasion represented a clear message to the Chinese that, despite its new relations with the U.S., Japan, and others, China was vulnerable to Soviet power. The invasion might also deliver a blow to the personal prestige of Deng Xiaoping, whom the Soviets now identified as Chinese public enemy number one, in his power struggle with Hua Guofeng.²³² Such a development might fuel further factional infighting, redirecting the attention of Chinese leaders inward again, or even inspire a victorious Chinese faction to make amends with the Soviet Union.²³³ The invasion also would put China in a difficult international position. If the Chinese did not react, Beijing would be seen as a "paper dragon," especially in Southeast Asia. However, if Beijing reacted against Vietnam, the Soviet portrayal of China as a warlike and dangerous country might be received more sympathetically in the West.²³⁴ Yet, the Soviets could hope to largely escape the same description being applied to themselves and their client since the

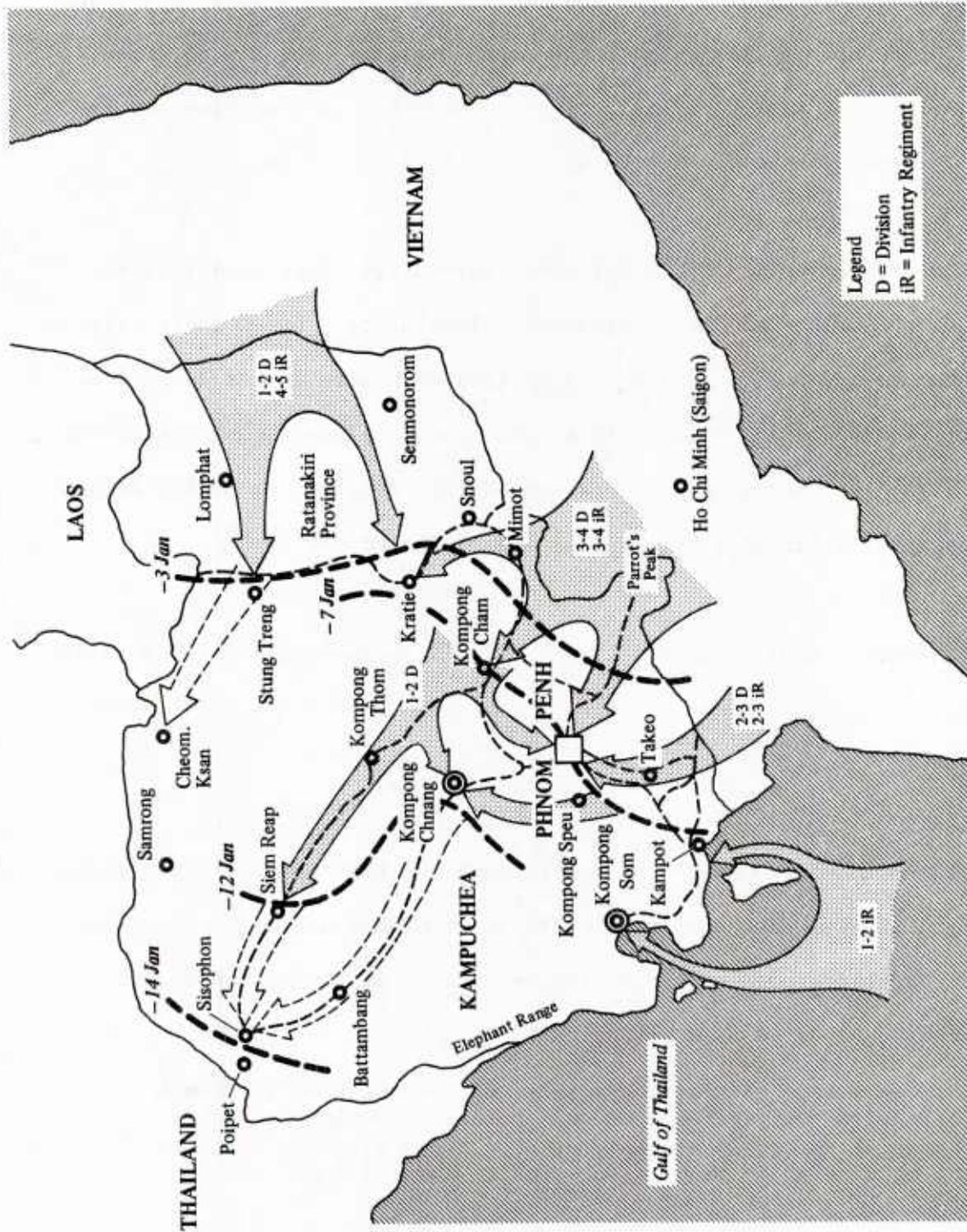


FIG. 4: VIETNAMESE INVASION OF KAMPUCHEA

invasion would overthrow a brutal regime abhorred in the West.*²³⁵ At the same time, a sudden Soviet refusal in December to take the final steps toward a SALT II accord probably was part of an effort to pressure the U.S. to choose the Soviet Union over China.²³⁷ For Moscow, then, the invasion of Kampuchea was part of an effort to force China and the West to deal with the Soviet Union on the Kremlin's terms.

On 25 December 1978, 12 Vietnamese divisions, supported by air strikes of Soviet-made and captured American planes, began their drive on Phnom Penh. Pol Pot and his supporters soon were forced to take up guerrilla warfare in Kampuchea's mountainous provinces in the south and west. In Phnom Penh, Hanoi installed KNUFNS' Heng Samrin as leader of the newly established People's Republic of Kampuchea.²³⁸

POOR TEACHERS, SLOW LEARNERS: CHINA INVADES VIETNAM, JANUARY-MARCH 1979

Rationale

The Chinese ideograph for crisis combines the characters for danger and opportunity. For Beijing, the invasion of Kampuchea by Soviet-backed Vietnam represented a threat to its security. As Deng Xiaoping put it:

...we need to act appropriately, we cannot allow Vietnam to run wild everywhere. In the interest of world peace and stability, and in the interests of our own country, we may be forced to do what we do not like to do.²³⁹

* Indeed, the Soviets charged that Chinese advisors were responsible for the Khmer Rouge's brutality.²³⁵

What China did not like to do was challenge the Soviet Union as well as tackle Vietnam.²⁴⁰ Yet, failure to do so was to acquiesce in Soviet efforts to encircle and intimidate China.²⁴¹ Thus, for Beijing, the invasion of Vietnam was an opportunity to demonstrate that China would resist any effort to encircle and intimidate it.²⁴² It would demonstrate Chinese unity in the face of Soviet propaganda attempts to play on domestic differences between Deng and Hua Guofeng.²⁴³ It would show both Vietnam and the Soviet Union that Chinese warnings were to be taken seriously. On another level, it was an opportunity to demonstrate that the Soviet Union was a "paper polar bear" and thereby encourage the West and the United States in particular to resist Soviet "hegemonism."²⁴⁴ As Deng put it, there was little China could do about the situation in Iran but it could do something about Soviet activism in Southeast Asia.²⁴⁵ It also was an opportunity to show the ASEAN countries in particular and the rest of the South and East Asian countries that China was a reliable ally, and that they could depend upon China to help oppose Vietnam, "the little hegemon."²⁴⁶ In December, the Zhongnanhai apparently decided to prepare for an invasion of Vietnam.²⁴⁷

* It is often argued that Beijing hoped that Vietnam also would be forced to evacuate or draw down its forces in Kampuchea.²⁴⁸ Yet, China was careful to claim the invasion was in response to Vietnamese border provocations while merely denouncing the invasion of Kampuchea as evidence of Vietnamese hegemonism.²⁴⁹ The Chinese did not claim their action would force Vietnam out of Kampuchea.²⁵⁰ Rather, the Chinese hoped that increased Vietnamese military preparations on the China border as a result of the invasion, Chinese support for the Kampuchean guerrilla movement, the consequent strain on the Vietnamese economy, and eventual irritation with its dependency upon the Soviet Union, would force Vietnam to improve relations with China and withdraw from Kampuchea.²⁵¹

Preparations

Chinese preparations for the invasion were both political and military. The Chinese were concerned about Soviet military retaliation on their northern border.²⁵² But they felt Moscow was unlikely to attack without assurances of security from the West and without a large-scale mobilization of Soviet forces.²⁵³ So to deter the Soviet Union on a political level, Deng Xiaoping used his trip to the United States and Japan to announce Beijing's intention to "punish Vietnam," to "teach Vietnam a lesson," thereby suggesting American and Japanese acquiescence in the Chinese invasion.*²⁵⁴ In addition, the timing of the military action was cleverly disguised by scheduling it during the Indian Foreign Minister's visit to Beijing.²⁵⁶ To deter the Soviet Union on the military level, China reinforced its forces in the north, created a new military district in Xinjiang, evacuated civilians from the border area, and alerted its naval and probably its strategic rocket forces.²⁵⁷

To first pressure, then punish, Hanoi, the Chinese began to visibly move large numbers of troops and aircraft to the border area in December. Some 320,000 troops (about 24-25 divisions) and 700 aircraft were assembled for the invasion. The Chinese forces were drawn mainly from the Chengdu, Wuhun, and other military regions (MRs). Hainan and Paracel Islands were reinforced, the South Sea Fleet was deployed, and

* Needless to say, the Soviets were upset by Deng's remarks and asked Washington to clarify the meaning of his visit.²⁵⁵

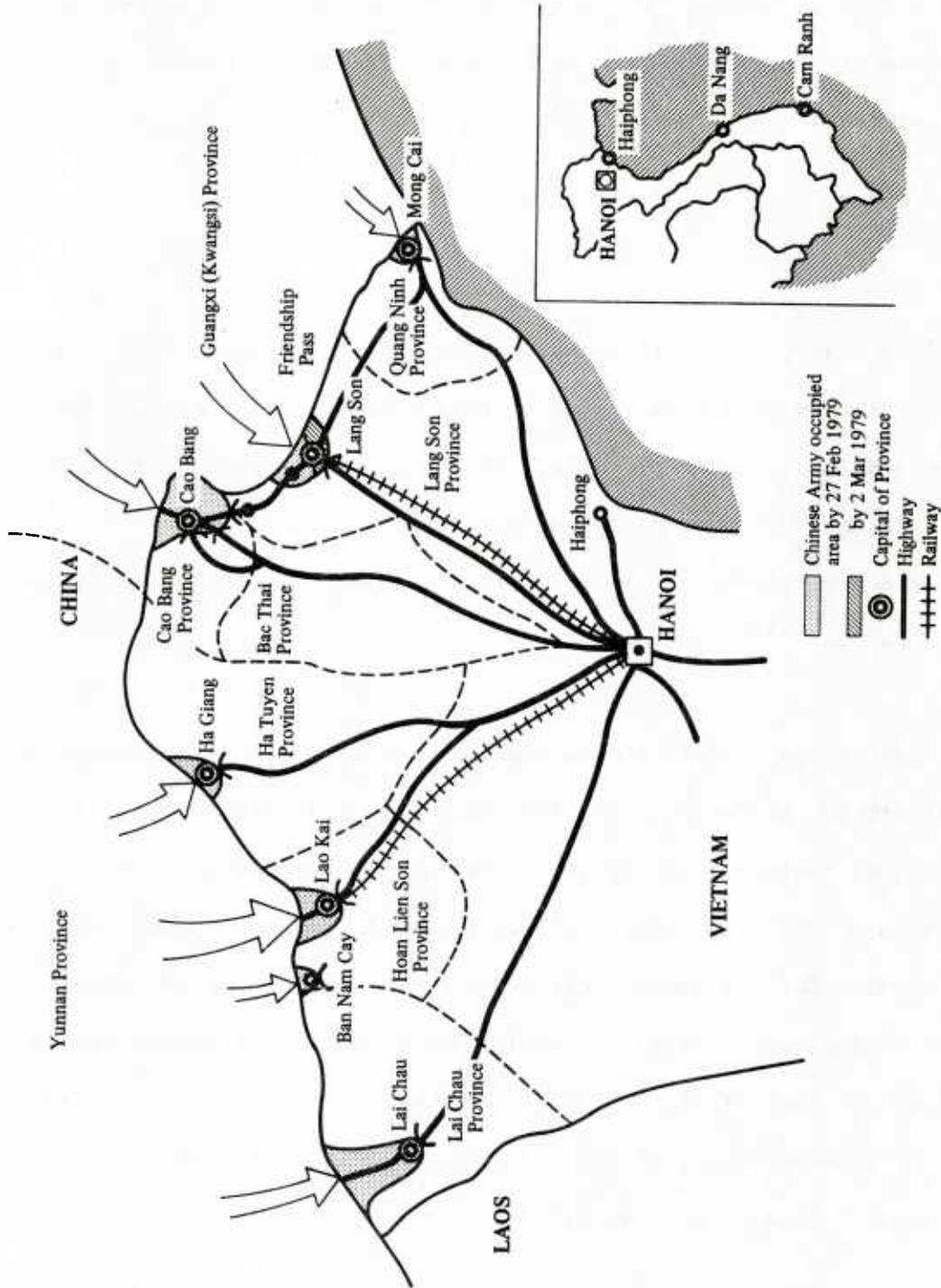
Chinese oil rigs in the Gulf of Tonkin were dismantled. The operation was under the command of the head of the Guangzhou MR, Xu Shiyou, a close associate of Deng Xiaoping.²⁵⁸

Invasion

On 17 February, an artillery barrage announced the entry of Chinese troops into Vietnam on a broad front.* They were initially opposed by Vietnamese and border security units. As the fighting wore on, regular units joined the fray. Two divisions also were withdrawn from Kampuchea. However, some regular divisions remained north of Hanoi to defend the capital.²⁵⁹

The mountainous terrain slowed the Chinese advance and inhibited the use of armor. By February 20, the Chinese were forced to consolidate and adjust their tactics to the terrain. But they soon resumed their advance on the provincial capitals of the border provinces. On February 22, the Chinese began their assault on Lang Son, an important provincial capital and gateway to Hanoi. Here the most important battle of the incursion took place, and the Chinese won it by March 3. On March 5, the Chinese announced that Vietnam had been "punished" and withdrew from Vietnam by mid-March.²⁶⁰

* Ironically, some Chinese forces invaded Vietnam through the misnamed Friendship Pass.



Source: Asian Security 1979

FIG. 5: CHINESE INVASION OF VIETNAM

In the meantime, the Chinese throughout maintained that the invasion was limited in time and scope.²⁶¹ It was designed to punish Hanoi, not sieze Vietnamese territory. (Beijing may have also intended to reassure Moscow by conducting river navigation talks with the Soviet Union from late February until late March.)²⁶² To signal the limited nature of the invasion on a military level, the Chinese deployed aircraft and naval vessels but did not use them in actual combat. However, Chinese aircraft were used for reconnaissance in the combat theater and in the surrounding seas.*²⁶³ The Vietnamese recognized the signals and refrained from escalating the conflict by using their aircraft or naval vessels.

The Soviet Reaction

To ensure Chinese restraint and to demonstrate Soviet concern, Moscow took military steps on both the northern border and in the combat theater. Victor Louis, a Soviet journalist prominent as a conduit for

* The Chinese refrained from using aircraft in their 1962 invasion of India.²⁶⁴ Nor did the Chinese and Soviets use aircraft or naval vessels in their clashes in 1969, although they were readied during the crisis. The unsuitability of the terrain and differences in aircraft size (a Chinese advantage) and modernity (a Vietnamese advantage) usually are cited also as reasons for restraint.²⁶⁵ However, the Kampucheans and especially the Vietnamese employed aircraft extensively before and during the invasion of Kampuchea despite unsuitable terrain.²⁶⁶ As for the navies, China enjoyed a preponderant advantage somewhat offset by the Soviet naval presence.²⁶⁷ Yet, there were no reported seizures by China and Vietnam of each other's merchant vessels as occurred prior to the incursion.²⁶⁸ Thus, Chinese restraint in the air and naval weaponry was mostly a political signal of the limited nature of the incursion that the Vietnamese recognized on their own or were told as much by their Soviet allies.

Moscow's threats in 1969, claimed that Soviet forces in the Far East had been alerted and leave had been cancelled. It also was reported by the Chinese that the Soviets conducted firing exercises at the border. Indeed, tanks supposedly were moved to the Manchurian border and blanks were fired across it. Soviet aerial reconnaissance of the border area also increased. The Chinese reacted by stepping up their readiness posture, including moving some troops closer to the border.* This, in turn, may have drawn the Soviets to intensify their surveillance of the border area.²⁶⁹

In the latter stages of the Chinese invasion, the Soviets conducted in the Transbaikal and Mongolian MDs one of the largest military exercises they ever held in the Far East. Although the exercise probably was preplanned, Moscow no doubt hoped that the significance of Soviet military capabilities would not be lost on the Chinese and other observers. Since the exercise probably involved Soviet naval units that had been deployed in reaction to the Chinese incursion, the Soviets were playing on Chinese fear of encirclement. This, then, represented the military equivalent of Soviet political efforts to isolate China.**²⁷¹

* Chinese forces, unlike Soviet ones, are not concentrated close to the border.²⁷⁰ The Chinese strategy still involves luring the enemy inside China where he can be destroyed in a "sea of Chinese."

** Interestingly, on February 25, the Minsk carrier task group began its long-awaited trip to the Pacific when it entered the Mediterranean from the Black Sea. This was just eight days after the invasion—the exact number of days the Turkish government requires for advance notification of the movement of Soviet warships through the straits of the Dardanelles. Intentionally or not, this powerful task group, composed of the Kiev-class carrier Minsk, two Kara-class cruisers, the largest Soviet amphibious ship (the Ivan Rogov) and an oiler, reminded the Chinese and other observers of Soviet ability to project power in the Pacific.²⁷²

In the combat theater, Moscow began demonstrating a naval interest in late January when an intelligence ship began patrolling in the South China Sea. As the Chinese buildup shifted into military action, the Soviets continued to increase their naval forces until they numbered approximately 20 surface vessels and probably some submarines. They were deployed around the Tsushima Straits, the East China Sea, and the South China Sea. The bulk of the force, about 10 vessels, operated in the South China Sea and the Gulf of Tonkin. However, the whole operation was directed from the Admiral Senyavin, a command and control cruiser that patrolled the East China Sea between Shanghai and Okinawa.²⁷³

Besides constituting a menacing presence, Soviet naval dispositions probably were designed also to monitor the naval activities of the Chinese North, East, and South Sea Fleets, defend Soviet and Vietnamese merchant shipping, and keep an eye out for U.S. naval deployments. In the combat area, Soviet naval transports in the South China Sea also were used to help ferry troops and supplies from South to North Vietnam. Soviet port visits to Vietnam, including Danang and Cam Ranh Bay, further underlined Moscow's support for Hanoi. Intelligence ships also collected information and presumably passed it on to the Vietnamese. In addition, Soviet naval activities in the vicinity of Hainan and especially the Paracels were probably designed to underscore

Chinese vulnerability to Soviet naval capabilities. Significantly, the Chinese withdrew their oil rigs from the Gulf of Tonkin at the onset of hostilities. In turn, the Chinese used their naval and naval-air capabilities to keep Soviet activities under surveillance. Further, the South Sea Fleet signalled Chinese determination by conducting task group exercises during the conflict.²⁷⁴

The Kremlin also conducted naval air reconnaissance from the Soviet coastal area to the South China Sea—including the Paracel Islands. On February 18, the day after the invasion, two Tu-95 Bear D reconnaissance planes conducted the first flights. By March 17, flights had been conducted on eight occasions. On April 11, two Tu-95 aircraft landed for the first time at Danang air base in Vietnam.²⁷⁵

Soviet satellite reconnaissance also was active. Indeed, the Soviets launched additional reconnaissance satellites, Kosmos 1078 and 1079, on February 22 and February 27, and may have deorbited them earlier than usual to obtain up-to-date photographic intelligence.²⁷⁶

In direct support of the Vietnamese, the Soviets initiated an air and sealift of military supplies to Vietnam. Some 79 missions were flown by Soviet transport aircraft between 22 February and late May. For the first time in a crisis, the Soviets used their new IL-76 transport aircraft as well as their older AN-12s and AN-22s. AN-12s were also used to shuttle troops and supplies within Indochina. Generally,

flights were flown from the Soviet Union via Baghdad and India over Southeast Asia to Vietnam. However, a steady stream of Soviet ships probably delivered the bulk of military supplies to Vietnam. In addition, Soviet military officials presumably gave the Vietnamese the benefit of their experience.²⁷⁷

U.S. Involvement

As we have seen, Soviet and Chinese efforts to gain or deny support to each other led to the Sino-Vietnamese border war. In the competition preceding this Sino-Soviet crisis, the U.S. played a major role. Therefore, it is not surprising that both the Soviet Union and China looked to the U.S. for support in the confrontation.

The Soviets used the crisis to substantiate their portrayal of the Chinese as an aggressive, warlike country. They warned the U.S. and the West in general that the Chinese wished to draw the Soviet Union and the United States into a war from which only Beijing could benefit. They also pointed out that the Chinese were enemies of detente and a SALT II agreement. They charged that U.S. policies and Western arms sales were encouraging Beijing's aggressive policies. Thus, Moscow used the crisis to disrupt China's growing relations with the West. However, the Soviets were disappointed.²⁷⁸

The United States seemed to lean toward China in the crisis.* Although the U.S. called on Moscow and Beijing for restraint, Washington minimized the Chinese action by terming it a "border penetration" and by directly linking it with the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea.²⁸⁰ Nor did the Chinese action prevent the Secretary of Treasury Michael Blumenthal from conducting his planned visit to Beijing.²⁸¹ Furthermore, Washington announced that planned naval operations in the Far East would proceed.²⁸² Indeed, the U.S. conducted naval and air reconnaissance of the combat theater.²⁸³ U.S. satellites also took an active interest in the conflict.²⁸⁴ The Washington also stepped up the flow of arms to Thailand, which was threatened by the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea.²⁸⁵

The Soviets, in turn, interpreted U.S. military activities in the region as support for China. Moscow claimed that Deng's visit to the U.S. and Blumenthal's trip to China indicated that Washington and Beijing were colluding against the Soviet Union and Vietnam.²⁸⁶ The Soviet media linked U.S. naval exercises in February near the time of the Chinese action (including Multiplex 279 involving U.S. and Japanese ships) as being directed against Vietnam in support of China and Thailand.²⁸⁷ Considering their earlier concern for the Enterprise, the

* Nor were the Soviets able to dampen European interest in closer ties with China. For example, the Soviets noted that Britain's Industry Minister, Eric Varley, and the President of the EEC Commission, Roy Jenkins, visited China during the conflict. Moscow was particularly upset that Varley was there to discuss the sale of Harrier jump-jets to China.²⁷⁹

appearance of the cruiser Sterett with two destroyers in Hong Kong on February 20 probably was interpreted by the Soviets as U.S. support for China.²⁸⁸ (U.S. ships also visited Thai ports in the crisis.)²⁸⁹ Indeed, the Chinese may also have played further on Soviet sensitivity in this regard. The Hong Kong communist press claimed approvingly that American SAC reconnaissance planes, C-135s, overflew Hong Kong on a surveillance mission of Soviet ships near the Paracels.²⁹⁰ Moscow also claimed that "Team Spirit 79," which was even larger than the 1978 exercise, especially heightened regional tensions in the context of the Sino-Vietnamese conflict.*²⁹¹

The Kremlin was particularly upset by the deployment of the Constellation battle group from Subic Bay to the South China Sea west of Luzon on February 25.²⁹³ A TASS report on February 26 stated:

The New York Times writes that the United States 'is demonstrating silent support' for the Chinese interference in Vietnam. And not only silent support. According to reports from Western information agencies, the U.S. aircraft carrier Constellation has left its naval base in the Phillipines and has set out for the South China Sea, that is, nearer to the shores of Vietnam. It is not hard to guess in whose support this showing of the U.S. flag is being carried out.²⁹⁴

* Significantly, there was little Japanese objection, official or otherwise, to the exercise. Indeed, the Japanese seemed to appreciate the demonstration of U.S. power in the context of the conflict and instability in the Mideast.²⁹²

The Soviets went on to link detente to Chinese behavior:

Beijing's irrational actions, the expansion of its aggression in Vietnam, the obvious collusion of the West in its expansionist policy--all this undoubtedly leads to an increase in tension, and not only in Southeast Asia. China's actions may have a negative effect on the international atmosphere as a whole, particularly at a time when exceptionally important negotiations on disarmament are being conducted in Geneva and Vienna, in addition to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks.²⁹⁵

The day after the Chinese announced their withdrawal from Vietnam, on March 5, the Carter administration announced that the Constellation was being deployed to the Indian Ocean in response to the Yemen crisis.²⁹⁶ The Chinese noted the development approvingly; the Soviets condemned it and linked it with U.S. collusion with China in the Indochina crisis.²⁹⁷

For the Soviets, the deployment of the Constellation to the Gulf of Aden must have been evidence of what Moscow greatly fears--a U.S. effort to exploit a Sino-Soviet crisis. Although the Soviets probably

supported the PDRY's conflict with North Yemen,* they probably feared that a strong U.S. and Saudi reaction to the fighting might jeopardize the Moscow-oriented government in Aden. And besides sending a battle group to the Gulf of Aden, the U.S. had announced earlier a step-up in military assistance to North Yemen. The Saudis, in turn, were moving forces to the Yemen border and providing Sana with military aid. The Soviets then were anxious to bring the crisis to an end. Thus, the Syrians and Iraqis, working in the Arab League, were finally able to

* The fighting had its origins in June 1978 when the leaders of the two Yemens were assassinated and even more radical and Soviet-oriented leaders took control in Aden. The new government in Sana, North Yemen became concerned that the PDRY would undertake armed aggression against the YAR beginning with subversion and ending with the occupation of North Yemen cities. After a coup in the YAR, probably inspired by South Yemen and Libya, failed in October, Aden may have decided to destabilize the regime through military action. South Yemen probably decided to step up its support for the National Democratic Front, an Aden-oriented guerrilla movement in the YAR, and to prepare for any opportunity that might arise. The Soviets apparently approved. There were too many Soviets, Cubans, and East Germans in South Yemen for them not to know what was going on. Moreover, military shipments to South Yemen jumped dramatically after the coup in June. Moscow may have hoped that turmoil in the Yemens and revolution in Iran would make the Saudi's receptive to Soviet efforts to establish relations with Riyadh in early 1979. In any case, a border fight broke out between North and South Yemen in late 1978 and early 1979. In mid-February the border conflict escalated and the PDRY quickly gained the upper hand. The Soviets and the Cubans apparently backed the PDRY and the rebels in North Yemen. The Arab League persuaded the two Yemens to agree to a truce, but the fighting continued. The PDRY seemed intent on seizing Taiz, an important North Yemen city, in order to destabilize the Sana government.²⁹⁸

persuade the PDRY to end the fighting in mid-March.* Thus, the Soviets suffered a set back in Indochina and the Mideast.**²⁹⁹

Not surprisingly, Moscow responded by concluding the SALT II agreement with the U.S. and began negotiations with China to improve relations preceding the impending lapse of the 30-year Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation (1950).***³⁰³ The Chinese also began border negotiations with Vietnam.³⁰⁵ Although SALT II and the other negotiations failed to bring about an improvement in Great Power relations, the situation in Indochina has stabilized into a mutual acceptance of an unstable status quo.

Aftermath

As we have seen, the U.S. played a significant role in the Sino-Soviet crisis of 1979. Before and during the crisis, the Chinese and Soviets looked to the U.S. for support. In leaning toward China in

* Like the Soviets, the Syrians and the Iraqis apparently feared U.S. intervention in the Yemens.

** Moscow may have tried to recoup its losses in these regions as well. Perhaps to counter the Constellation and then Midway deployments to the Arabian Sea, the Minsk showed the flag in the Gulf of Aden in May 1979 before proceeding to the Pacific in June.³⁰⁰ Indeed, soon after the Yemen crisis, the Kremlin began to compete with the U.S. and Saudi Arabia for influence in North Yemen by offering military aid to Sana.³⁰¹ Moreover, according to then Prime Minister Morarji Desai, the Soviets urged him, during his trip to Moscow in June, to "teach a lesson" to Pakistan.³⁰²

*** Again indicating that they linked events in the Yemens and Indochina, the Soviets delayed the beginning of negotiations with the Chinese so their chief delegate, Deputy Foreign Minister Ilyichev, could accompany Kosygin on a trip to Addis Ababa and Aden in September 1979.³⁰⁴

1978, the U.S. may have further encouraged the Soviet Union to "encircle" China by supporting Vietnam. Yet, China was encouraged to resist Soviet intimidation and impose a cost on Soviet activism by punishing Vietnam. (Furthermore, Japan, Thailand, and the other ASEAN nations also were encouraged to resist Soviet and Vietnamese political goals in the region.)

Indeed, in securing closer ties with the U.S. and limiting the time and scope of the action, the Chinese correctly calculated that Moscow would not undertake a major military action on their border. Yet, Deng did believe that serious border incidents were likely. However, Moscow did not respond in this manner.

Why not? Although the Kremlin was intent on disrupting Chinese relations with the West by portraying Beijing as aggressive and bent on war, this would not rule out a few border incidents as reminders of Soviet power. Rather, the U.S., in apparently leaning toward Beijing during the crisis, may have helped restrain the Soviets for fear that direct action against China might only draw Washington and Beijing closer together. In a sense, then, the U.S. is at the center of Sino-Soviet crises, and holds the balance of power in them.

EVALUATIONS

In this section, we will first discuss the motivations of the Soviet Union, China, and the U.S. in the two crises. Second, we'll analyze the crises in light of two well-known theories of crisis behavior. The first is Allen Whiting's so-called Chinese calculus of deterrence, based on Chinese crises not involving the USSR. The other is James McConnell's "rules of the game," based on patterns of U.S.-Soviet behavior in Third World crises. Neither of these theories was meant to apply to the combined behavior of the U.S., the Soviet Union, and China in the two crises under review. But the exercise of testing their applicability can give us a better understanding of these crises and help us derive a variant that will apply to these and perhaps future Sino-Soviet crises. Having done so, we will have a better understanding of the U.S. role in such crises and can evaluate U.S. politico-military options (especially naval ones) that might moderate a Sino-Soviet confrontation or otherwise produce advantage for the U.S.

MOTIVATIONS

As we have seen, the two crises were marked by a complex interplay of action and reaction among the three countries. However, the Soviet Union's motivations in the crises can be reduced to a desire to:

- Contain China
- Intimidate China into a political settlement
- Preempt a U.S.-PRC rapprochement in 1969 and disrupt increasingly close relations among the U.S., Japan, and China in 1978.

For the Chinese, the motivations included a desire to:

- Show that China is not a "paper dragon"
- Respond to perceived Soviet efforts to encircle China
- Demonstrate that Moscow could not exploit Chinese political and economic disputes arising from the Cultural Revolution in 1968 and from differences between Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiaoping in 1978.

In both crises, the United States seemed to:

- Hold the balance of power
- Lean toward the Chinese
- Try to gain leverage vis-a-vis China and the Soviet Union.

CRISIS BEHAVIOR

This assessment of the two crises indicates that Whiting's "Chinese calculus of deterrence" gives us valuable insights into Chinese behavior during the confrontations.*³⁰⁶ According to Whiting, the Chinese believe that they must be prepared to respond to any potential threat to their territorial integrity or interests; that such threats are likely to materialize during periods of internal political differences; and that the best deterrence is belligerence. That is, the Chinese must use military instruments in a carefully orchestrated pattern to demonstrate their unity in the face of an adversary, to show that they cannot be intimidated, and to force the adversary to desist in its hostile actions. In the two crises, the Chinese clearly used military signals and actions to respond to perceived Soviet attempts to threaten China and perhaps exploit Chinese internal political and economic differences.

The insights that McConnell's "rules of the game" provide regarding U.S., Soviet, and Chinese behavior are less straightforward, but no less valuable.** The "rules" described how the superpowers have used politico-military instruments to regulate Third World conflicts between their respective clients. These conflicts generally have not involved

* Allen S. Whiting. The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indochina. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975.

** James M. McConnell, "'The Rules of the Game,': A Theory on the Practice of Superpower Naval Diplomacy," in Soviet Naval Diplomacy. Bradford Dismukes and James McConnell (Eds.), New York: Pergamon Press, 1979: 240-280.

the vital interests of the superpowers. In short, a superpower may intervene on the side of its client if its client is on the defensive or threatened with major loss. The other superpower uses its military, usually naval, instruments to signal its interest in the conflict and to warn the intervening superpower to limit its intervention to the restoration of the territorial status quo ante.

In the case of the Ussuri crisis, the "rules" did not apply to Soviet and Chinese behavior. The crisis did not meet some key conditions under which the "rules" operate:

- China is not a superpower. That is, it cannot wage global war.
- The dispute touched vital security interests and involved military clashes between the two principals.

Yet, in regard to the U.S., the "rules" highlighted Washington's disposition to uphold the international balance of power--the status quo, if you will. The U.S. expressed its opposition to Soviet military actions against China, even though China was not a client of the U.S. at the time.

The "rules" seem more applicable to the Sino-Vietnamese border war.

- Vietnam, a Soviet client, violated the status quo by invading and occupying Kampuchea, a Chinese client.
- China sought to rectify the status quo by punishing, not destroying, Vietnam.
- The Soviets used military forces, especially naval ones, to signal their concern and to limit the extent and effects of Chinese action.
- Nevertheless, China is still not a superpower, although it is increasingly powerful militarily.

The U.S. again expressed by words and perhaps naval movements its support for China even while voicing its doubts concerning the wisdom of the Chinese incursion. The U.S. in both crises seemed intent on preserving the balance of power.

From the two theories, and the events themselves, one could derive a variant that perhaps better explains Soviet-Chinese-U.S. crisis behavior. Their behavior might be reduced to a series of maxims:

- For the Soviets: when in doubt, bully.
- For the Chinese: when threatened, strike back.

- For the U.S.: when there's a crisis, uphold the balance of power.

Out of Soviet and Chinese crisis behavior, there has been a move away from direct conflict as in the Ussuri crisis to the emergence in the Sino-Vietnamese crisis of:

- Proxy conflicts
- Limited conflicts revolving around the status quo
- Use of politico-military instruments like naval and air forces for signalling purposes.

Thus, Moscow and Beijing are learning to regulate their competition on the U.S.-Soviet pattern.

However, the U.S. has to be there to make certain this continues to be the case. Inherently, there is a greater threat of conflict between the two principals than has been generally witnessed in U.S.-Soviet Third World crisis behavior. A heavily defended common border makes this so. The Soviet Union's greater military might and consequently China's lesser deterrent power also make such crises more volatile. Thus, Washington has tended to treat China as if she were our client in these crises. U.S. tendency to lean toward China seems to restrain the

Soviets and may be responsible for the move away from direct conflicts between China and the Soviet Union to proxy ones. The U.S., then, seems to be able to exercise an influence on Sino-Soviet relations in excess of its military capabilities because both the Soviet Union and China are anxious to gain support from each other or deny support to each other.

IMPLICATIONS

From our empirical and theoretical examination of these two crises, we can draw implications for U.S. policy in three broad areas: first, the U.S. role in future confrontations; second, the potential for turning such crises to advantage; and finally, the usefulness, in general, of the Chinese concept of punishment as a crisis option.

Let's now look at what this might imply in terms of a U.S. role in future confrontations. Since the Soviet Union is capable of defending its own security interests, the logical U.S. role would be to support vital Chinese security interests. To the extent that the U.S. disapproves of Chinese actions, it could deny China support allowing Moscow to discipline Beijing. If Soviet moves should threaten Chinese security, the U.S. could weigh in China's balance with statements and military moves.

These U.S. moves are based on or extrapolated from U.S. moves in past Sino-Soviet crises. They have then the advantage of being readily

intelligible to the Soviet Union, China, and other countries in the region. It could be expected that these moves would have the effect of restraining but not seriously threatening vital Soviet interests, and reassuring regional allies of U.S. protection from the possible spillover effects of a Sino-Soviet conflict. Such an effort would help preserve whatever leverage we have vis-a-vis China and the Soviet Union in the triangular relationship and help prevent our regional allies and trading partners from feeling they have to seek accommodation with either the Soviet Union or China.

How then might these U.S. moves be orchestrated? Without becoming overly specific, the opening phase of a crisis is likely to involve a proxy conflict or, much less likely, serious clashes on the Sino-Soviet border. Since the latter could arise out of the former, we can deal with the clashes as a more serious phase of a proxy conflict.

As we have seen, the Soviets are likely to respond to such a conflict by deploying naval forces, heightening reconnaissance of the China border and crisis theater, and directly supporting their client with air- and ship-borne arms and supplies, air and naval logistic support, coastal defense, port visits, military advice, training, and direction, and public statements of support. In this phase, the U.S. could discreetly support the Chinese and reassure allies by:

- Pressing restraints on the Soviets, both publicly and diplomatically
- Making naval port visits to Hong Kong and potentially threatened U.S. allies
- Using press reports to discreetly transform scheduled unilateral or combined military exercises into shows of strength or scheduling such exercises
- Moving carrier battle groups into a readiness position south of Cheju do (the traditional signal of support for South Korea) and/or off Subic Bay
- Secretly passing intelligence information to the Chinese on Soviet military movements so the Chinese can receive the proper signals.

In the next phase, the Soviets could escalate the crisis by changing the readiness posture of its aircraft, conduct unusual military exercises, or cease normal exercise routines, and possibly conduct small-scale clashes on the China border. In the crisis theater, an air or naval war between the Chinese and the Soviet client could break out, the Soviets could increase their naval deployments to the point of

seriously threatening Chinese islands, offshore oil rigs, Chinese merchant shipping, or naval forces.

In this case the U.S. could step up its warning signals to the Soviets by assuming a stronger readiness posture through:

- Deploying a carrier battle group to the Sea of Japan in response to the border threat
- Deploying a carrier battle group to the crisis theater in response to a serious threat there
- Augmenting WestPac with a carrier battle group
- Cancelling all military exercises in the region
- Alerting U.S. TacAir and Marines in the region
- conducting passing exercises with Chinese ships.

This is not the place to give serious assessment of U.S., Soviet, and Chinese options in a Sino-Soviet war. However, if deterrence fails and the U.S. deems it necessary to support China, such aid could be orchestrated in a way to satisfy the Chinese concept of self-reliance and the U.S. desire to avoid a ground war in Asia and a much wider war

with the Soviet Union. This could be done by limiting U.S. involvement to the kind the Soviet Union itself gave to Vietnam:

- Deployment of ships to Chinese ports

- Intelligence sharing

- Protection of merchant shipping

- Air- and ship-borne arms and supplies

- Air and naval logistical support

- Military training and advice.

In this way the Chinese would receive support, but not in a way that would threaten vital Soviet interests.

Let's turn to the possibility of the U.S. wringing advantage from these crises.

Crises are not only problems to be solved, but also opportunities to advance one's interests. The two cases under review were no exception. The U.S. emerged from the Ussuri crisis in an enhanced position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union and China. That crisis persuaded

Beijing that it would have to improve its relations with the U.S. Ties with China, in turn, spurred improved relations with the Soviet Union. The U.S. may have also benefitted from the Sino-Vietnamese War. On 5 March, Washington announced the deployment of the Constellation to the Indian Ocean in response to the Yemen crisis. Since this came on the day that the Chinese announced their withdrawal from Vietnam, the Kremlin may have thought the U.S. and China were coordinating their movements. Since Moscow greatly feared that the U.S. would exploit the Ussuri crisis for political advantage, they probably had similar fears in the Sino-Vietnamese crisis. This may have reinforced Soviet motivations for ending the Yemen crisis. Since future Sino-Soviet crises may also tie the Soviets down, there may also be ways for the U.S. to emerge in an enhanced position. Crises should be faced with a positive attitude.

Let's now consider the concept of "punishment." The Chinese concept of punishment presents a possible alternative to gradual escalation. In limited wars, gradual escalation is designed to send a series of military signals of increasing intensity to deter the adversary or persuade him to cease undesired actions. The problem with this approach is that if the opponent does not cease and desist, the country implementing the policy is faced with the prospect of an unlimited limited war--in time and perhaps in scope. "Punishment" gets around this problem by announcing in advance the scope and time range of the military action. It allows the Chinese to declare a victory and

leave. It also preserves Chinese flexibility to inflict another "punishment" at a time and place of their choosing. By the same token, it persuades the Chinese opponent to take into consideration the prospect of punishment in making future decisions.

The disadvantage of such a concept is its very advantage. It does not necessarily oblige the enemy to cease the actions that drew the "punishment." The Chinese incursion into Vietnam did not make the Vietnamese withdraw from Kampuchea. Furthermore, such punishments may be costly. Chinese casualties were in the tens of thousands.³⁰⁷ Some countries, particularly Western ones, consider such actions as aggressive behavior.

Nevertheless, the incursion did impose a significant cost on Vietnamese aggression. It enhanced Chinese prestige in Southeast Asia.³⁰⁸ It lent a certain verisimilitude to China's warning to Vietnam at the time of the Vietnamese incursion into Thailand in June, 1980.³⁰⁹ It also forced the Vietnamese to increase their war preparations adding to Hanoi's economic difficulties.³¹⁰

Thus, in some situations, the U.S. might find "punishment" as one option between gradual escalation and doing nothing. If so, the Navy and its carrier battle groups are ready instruments for such punishments.

EPILOGUE

Moscow and Beijing's recent efforts to improve relations should not obscure the fact that Soviet and Chinese competition in Asia has continued, perhaps intensified, since 1979.³¹¹ China has pursued efforts to develop closer relations with the United States and Japan. Beijing continues to strengthen its economic ties with Washington as both capitals consider the prospects for military cooperation.³¹² The Chinese also support Japan's efforts to improve its self-defense forces.³¹³ Beijing trades with South Korea and Taiwan, through intermediaries, and has made numerous overtures to Taipei to renew its relationship with mainland China.³¹⁴ In Southeast Asia, China has improved its relations with the ASEAN states by supporting their effort to deny Kampuchea's seat in the United Nations to the Vietnamese supported-Heng Samrin regime in Phnom Penh.³¹⁵ The Chinese have also scaled down their support for communist guerrillas in the region to woo Malaysia and Indonesia, which remain suspicious of Beijing.³¹⁶ However, relations between China and Thailand have improved dramatically as both countries have moved to support the guerrillas fighting the Vietnamese in Kampuchea.³¹⁷ In South Asia, Beijing has tried to improve relations with India while supporting Pakistan against Soviet-occupied Afghanistan.³¹⁸

In turn, Soviet military activity along China's periphery has increased. In December 1979, Soviet troops occupied Afghanistan, which

borders China and China's client, Pakistan. Soviet-supported Afghanis (and probably Soviet forces as well) regularly violate Pakistan's border as Moscow tries to put down the guerrillas in Afghanistan.³¹⁹ The Kremlin has also tried to prevent a rapprochement among China, India, and Pakistan by loading down New Delhi with weapons.³²⁰ The Soviets continue to arm Hanoi while increasing their military, especially naval, presence in Vietnam.*³²¹ The Soviets have continued their support for Vietnam's efforts to suppress the guerrilla war in Kampuchea—a war that regularly spills over into Thailand.³²³ The Chinese and the Vietnamese also accuse each other of provoking incidents along the border and on the nearby seas.³²⁴ And on China's northern border, the Soviets have increased their military presence by five divisions since 1979.³²⁵

Thus, another crisis between the Soviet Union and China remains a possibility. And if one occurs, both countries will watch carefully how the United States reacts and will calibrate their actions accordingly.

* Indeed, the Soviets deployed the Minsk to the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand in August 1980—the first time the Soviet carrier operated out of the Sea of Japan since it entered the Pacific in June 1979. This deployment may have been a belated gesture of support to Vietnam after the U.S. and China warned Hanoi against invading Thailand in June 1980.³²²

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- [57] Moscow, Izvestiya, 24 Nov 1968, FBIS: Soviet Union, 4 Dec 1968, A14; Moscow, TASS, 3 Dec 1968, FBIS: Soviet Union, 4 Dec 1968, A6; Moscow, TASS, 9 Dec 1968, FBIS: Soviet Union, 10 Dec 1968, A7; Moscow, TASS, 13 Dec 1968, FBIS: Soviet Union, 17 Dec 1968, A30; Moscow, TASS, 26 Dec 1968, Foreign Broadcasting Information Service, Daily Report, Middle East and Africa, 9 Jan 1969, M1; Moscow, TASS, 23 Feb 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 25 Feb 1969, A24; Tokyo, Japan Times, 26 Feb 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, A19-A20; Moscow, TASS, 1 Mar 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 3 Mar 1969, A51; Moscow, TASS, 14 Mar 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 17 Mar 1969, A16-A17
- [58] Moscow Radio, 4 Dec 1968, FBIS: Soviet Union, 9 Dec 1968, A29; Moscow Radio, 4 Feb 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 13 Feb 1969, A35-A37
- [59] Peking, NCNA, 5 Mar 1969, FBIS: China, 6 Mar 1969, A2-A3. The Chinese do not say when these trips took place, but they mention them in context with their complaints about General Losik's statement in December regarding the "combat readiness" of Soviet forces in the Far East. So the trips probably took place shortly before or after the General's threat. The Soviets seem to have kept silent about the trips. However, Brezhnev would take a similar tour of the Far East in early 1978 at a time of tension in Sino-Soviet relations so the Chinese complaint may have been a valid one
- [60] Moscow, Izvestiya, 3 Dec 1968, FBIS: Soviet Union, 16 Dec 1968, E1
- [61] Moscow, Pravda, 29 Jan 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 6 Feb 1969, A39. Significantly, the article also denies "Mao's personal creation of the Red Army." It asserts that the PLA was created at the time of the Canton uprising when Qu Quibai was head of the CCP

- [62] Maxwell, Neville, "The Chinese Account of the 1969 Fighting at Chenpao," The China Quarterly, Oct/Dec 1973, 733. General Losik's article in Izvestiya in December also implies that the Soviets had increased their "watchfulness" in the Far East. Moscow, Izvestiya, 3 Dec 1968, FBIS: Soviet Union, 16 Dec 1968, E1
- [63] For the Soviet account of the incident, see Moscow, Pravda, 12 Mar 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 21 Mar 1969, A28. For the Chinese account, see Maxwell, "The Chinese Account of the 1969 Fighting at Chenpao," The China Quarterly, Oct/Dec 1973, 733
- [64] Nixon replied to the Soviet approach on Jan 20 during a press conference on Jan 27 by saying that he favored arms talks with Moscow. Newhouse, Cold Dawn, 140
- [65] Far Eastern Economic Review, 6 Feb 1969, 224
- [66] Peking, NCNA, 6 Mar 1969, FBIS: China, 6 Mar 1969, A8
- [67] Far Eastern Economic Review, 6 Feb 1969, 224
- [68] NCNA, 28 Dec 1968, Peking Review, 3 Jan 1969, 5-6. Significantly, the New Year's Day editorial, published simultaneously in People's Daily, Red Flag, PLA Liberation Daily, emphasized the October's Plenum's call for "consolidating national defense" while passing over in silence the Plenum's call for administrative simplification, educational reform, party rectification, and the "revolutionization" of the economy. Peking Review, 3 Jan 1969, 7-10
- [69] See references 25-28 and 60
- [70] Peking NCNA, 25 Jan 1969, FBIS: China, 27 Jan 1969, B1-B4; Peking, NCNA, 18 Feb 1969, FBIS: China, 18 Feb 1969, A8. See Gottlieb, Chinese Foreign Policy Factionalism, 111. Gottlieb largely attributes the failure of the moderates' initiative to Nixon's lack of response to China's overture. This is partially true. But it must be emphasized that the January 23 incident required a unified response from China to demonstrate that the Soviets could not play on China's internal power struggles. Thus, Mao needed Lin's support for his policy in order to show China's unity in face of the Soviet threat. Also, like Roger Brown, Gottlieb believes that Mao and Zhou engineered the clash behind Lin's back to undermine Lin and his supporters in the power struggle underway in the Zhongnanhai. Again it would have defeated the purpose of Mao's policy to go behind Lin's back because the net result might emphasize Chinese disunity rather than unity. Besides it would have been foolhardy to challenge the Soviet Union without the support of the PLA leadership.

Besides, as Gottlieb points out, Lin's prominence increased after the 23 January incident.

Melvin Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang make a seemingly similar point that "the contending alternatives raised by Lin and Zhou were absorbed into Mao's line of opposing the United States and the Soviet Union simultaneously and defusing the growing threat by means of a limited, preemptive military action without sacrificing the domestic priorities of the P.R.C." However, Gurtov and Hwang ignore the implication of their contention that Mao was largely in charge of the leadership. If so, then Zhou could not have made the overture to the U.S. without Mao's support. What changed Mao's mind then? Clearly, it must have been a combination of motives: increased Soviet truculence following the overture to the U.S., a lack of response by the U.S. to China's overture, the need to demonstrate China's unity in the face of Soviet claims of Chinese factionalism among the people and in the leadership, and finally the need to reconcile divergent opinions within the Chinese leadership in a response to Moscow's challenge that would demonstrate that unity. Gottlieb, Chinese Foreign Policy Factionalism, 109-111; Brown, Roger Glenn, "Chinese Politics and American Policy," Foreign Policy, Summer 1976, 4-8; Gurtov, Melvin and Byong-Moo Hwang, China Under Threat: The Politics of Strategy and Diplomacy, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1981, 234-241

- [71] Maxwell, "The Chinese Account of the 1969 Fighting at Chenpao," The China Quarterly, Oct/Dec 1973, 731-733
- [72] Grechko left for New Delhi on 1 Mar 1969. The Chinese charged that the Soviet Defense Minister's visit to India was designed to strengthen Moscow's "counterrevolutionary military alliance" with India. The Chinese also claimed that Grechko discussed the Sino-Soviet clash with Indian officials. Moscow, TASS, 1 Mar 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 3 Mar 1969; Peking, NCNA, 11 Mar 1969, FBIS: China, 12 Mar 1969, A10-A11
- [73] Moscow Radio, 3 Mar 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 3 Mar 1969, A11-A12; Peking, NCNA, 3 Mar 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 3 Mar 1969, A10; Moscow, TASS, 7 Mar 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 7 Mar 1969, A40-A41. For good accounts of the event, see Robinson, "Sino-Soviet Border Dispute," American Political Science Review, Dec 1972, 1187-1189; Maxwell, "The Chinese Account of the Fighting at Chenpao," The China Quarterly, Oct/Dec 1973, 734-736
- [74] New York Times, 3 Mar 1969, 1
- [75] New York Times, 4 Mar 1969, 1

- [76] For the "Press Communique of the Secretariat of the Presidium of the Ninth National Congress of the Communist Party of China" see Peking Review, 4 Apr 1969. For Lin's report to the Ninth Congress see the special issue of Peking Review, 30 Apr 1969, 36-39
- [77] Maxwell, "The Chinese Account of the 1969 Fighting at Chenpao," The China Quarterly, Oct/Dec 1973, 734
- [78] Moscow Radio, 3 Mar 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 3 Mar 1969, A12
- [79] New York Times, 9 Mar 1969, 1; New York Times, 10 Mar 1969, 1; Moscow, Red Star, 1 Apr 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 4 Apr 1969, A3-A4
- [80] Ibid.
- [81] New York Times, 25 Mar 1969, 8; New York Times, 30 Mar 1969, 18; New York Times, 5 Apr 1969, 6; Moscow, Izvestiya, 5 Apr 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 8 Apr 1969, A13-A15
- [82] Hong Kong, CNA, 27 Mar 1969, FBIS: China, 27 Mar 1969, A2
- [83] Albania withdrew from the Warsaw Pact after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. The Albanians apparently were so concerned about a Soviet reaction that they hinted the Chinese would use nuclear weapons to aid Tirana against a Soviet attack. However, the PLA Chief of Staff Huang Yungsheng, on a visit to Tirana in late 1968, carefully refrained from making such an extravagant commitment. However, he did note the Soviet naval threat to Albania: "After occupying Czechoslovakia, the Soviet renegade revisionist clique sent troops into Bulgaria, equally extending its control over that country, and in the same way it sent warships into the Mediterranean, it threatens the safety of socialist Albania and the people of the Balkans, it increases still further its betrayal of the people of the Middle East." Pointedly, on a visit of the PRC delegation to the Albanian naval base at Vlore, Wu Juilin, the deputy commander of the PLA navy said "both our two peoples and armies tempered in the struggle against the imperialists and contemporary revisionists will always march together, fight together, and win together." Apparently, the Chinese agreed at this time to help Tirana shore-up its naval defenses. The Soviets took note of Huang Yungsheng's visit and denied that their navy posed a threat to Albania. Moreover, they noted somewhat bitterly that Huang did not say that the U.S. 6th Fleet threatened Albania and charged that Tirana was trying to get under the NATO umbrella. Tirana, ATA, 2 Dec 1968, Foreign Broadcasting Information Service, Daily Report, Eastern Europe, 3 Dec 1968, B4. Hereafter FBIS: EE. Tirana Radio, 1 Dec 1968, FBIS: EE, 2 Dec 1968, B4; Far Eastern

- Economic Review, 3 Oct 1968, 7-8; Swanson, Bruce, Eighth Voyage of the Dragon: A History of China's Quest For Sea Power, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis Maryland, 1982, 256; Moscow Radio, 11 Dec 1968, A36-A37; Moscow Radio, 12 Dec 1968, FBIS: Soviet Union, 16 Dec 1968, A38-A39
- [84] New York Times, 30 Mar 1969, 18; Wall Street Journal, 19 Jun 1969, 1
- [85] New York Times, 8 Mar 1969, 1
- [86] Moscow, TASS, 15 Mar 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 18 Mar 1969, A56
- [87] For example, Moscow Radio, 23 Jan 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 27 Jan 1969, A60; Moscow Radio, 4 Feb 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 6 Feb 1969, A40; Tashkent Uigher Broadcasts, FBIS: Soviet Union, 22 Apr 1969, A23-A24; Moscow, Literary Gazette, 7 May 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 15 May 1969, A10-A12
- [88] For the Mar 15 incident, see Robinson, "Sino-Soviet Border Dispute," American Political Science Review, Dec 1972, 1189-1190; Maxwell, "The Chinese Account of the Fighting at Chenpao," The China Quarterly, Oct/Dec 1973, 736-739. For the dates and locations of the incidents in April and May, see Peking, NCNA, 6 Jun 1969, FBIS: China, 6 Jun 1969, A1
- [89] Brezhnev also urged the Warsaw Pact allies to raise their military budgets and increase their armed forces so the Soviet Union could reinforce its defenses in the Far East. New York Times, 19 Mar 1969, 15; Washington Post, 19 Mar 1969, A1; Kissinger, The White House Years, 173
- [90] Indeed, the arrival of a Yugoslav trade delegation in Beijing in February 1969 helped mark those improved relations. Tanjug, 26 Feb 1969, FBIS: China, 27 Feb 1969, A1. And it was at a Romanian reception that Zhou Enlai condemned the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, Peking Review, Supplement, 23 Aug 1968
- [91] Tatu, "Intervention in Eastern Europe," in Diplomacy of Power, Kaplan (ed.), 238
- [92] Ibid.
- [93] Time, 21 Mar 1969, 22; Kissinger, The White House Years, 178
- [94] Kissinger, The White House Years, 145-147, 172-173
- [95] New York Times, 18 Mar 1969, 3

- [96] Moscow, TASS, 11 Mar 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 11 Mar 1969, A16; Moscow Radio, 20 Mar 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 21 Mar 1969, A70
- [97] Peking Review, 21 Feb 1968, 22; Peking Review, 7 Mar 1969, 14-15
- [98] Peking, NCNA, 22 Apr 1969, FBIS: China, 22 Apr 1969, A1
- [99] For an analysis of the Soviet response to the EC-121 crisis see Abram N. Shulsky (ed.), "Coercive Diplomacy," in Soviet Naval Diplomacy, Dismukes and McConnell (eds.), 124, 126-127
- [100] Moscow, TASS, 30 Mar 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 1 Apr 1969, A1-A7, Moscow Radio, 12 Apr 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 14 Apr 1969, A1; Moscow, TASS, 2 May 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 5 May 1969, A1; Peking Review, 28 Apr 1969, 28; Peking Radio, 12 May 1969, FBIS: China, 12 May 1969, A11
- [101] Time, 20 Jun 1969, 28; Wall Street Journal, 19 Jun 1969, 1; NCNA, 6 Jun 1969, FBIS: China, 6 Jun 1969, A1-A2; Whiting, Allen S., "China and the Superpowers: Toward the Year 2000," Daedalus, Fall 1980, 99-100; Far Eastern Economic Review, 3 Jul 1969, 85; Robinson, "The Sino-Soviet Border Conflict," Diplomacy of Power, Kaplan (ed.), 270
- [102] Moscow, TASS, 6 May 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 7 May 1969, A3; Far Eastern Economic Review, 3 Jul 1969, 84; Kissinger, The White House Years, 138
- [103] Peking, NCNA, 6 Jun 1969, FBIS: China, 6 Jun 1969, A1-A3; Peking, NCNA, 11 Jun 1969, FBIS: China, 11 Jun 1969, A1; Peking, NCNA, 8 Jul 1969, FBIS: China, 9 Jul 1969, A1; Peking, NCNA, 8 Jul 1969, FBIS: China, 9 Jul 1969, A2. Far Eastern Economic Review, 12 Jun 1969, 100. Washington Post, 28 Aug 1969, 1
- [104] Kissinger, The White House Years, 177. As early as 1967, Nixon, in a Foreign Affairs article expressed an interest in coming to an understanding with China. He even discussed the possibility with DeGaulle in his trip to Europe in early 1969. Nixon and Kissinger disagree on who raised the subject. Nixon said he did, Kissinger claimed DeGaulle did. Whoever raised the subject, Kissinger's point that the Administration did not begin to formulate a policy towards China until after the Ussuri clashes is well taken. (As we have seen, the Chinese would have agreed with Kissinger.) Nor would this be inconsistent with the report that Nixon asked DeGaulle in April 1969 (after the Ussuri incidents) to convey to the Chinese his interest in a rapprochement. Kissinger, The White House Years, 167-173; Nixon, RN, Vol I, 460-462; Kalb, Marvin and Bernard Kalb, Kissinger, Dell Publishing Company, New York 1974, 254-256

- [105] Kissinger, The White House Years, 173-179
- [106] Ibid. Kalb and Kalb, Kissinger, 256-258
- [107] Far Eastern Economic Review, 4 Sep 1969, 598; Far Eastern Economic Review, 18 Sept 1969, 737
- [108] Moscow, TASS, 8 Aug 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 11 Aug 1969, A1
- [109] Peking, NCNA, 13 Aug 1969, FBIS: China, 13 Aug 1969, A1; Moscow Radio, 13 Aug 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, A20-A21
- [110] Ibid. Time, 22 Aug 1969, 33
- [111] Kissinger, The White House Years, 183
- [112] Washington Post, 28 Aug 1969, 1
- [113] Moscow, TASS, 27 Aug 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 28 Aug 1969, A1-A7; Moscow, TASS, 1 Sep 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 3 Sep 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 19 Sep 1969, A11-A12; London Evening News, 16 Sep 1969, A11-A12
- [114] Kissinger, The White House Years, 183
- [115] Kissinger, The White House Years, 184. See also Washington Post, 5 Jul 1981, C4; Washington Post, 28 Aug 1969, A1;
- [116] New York Times, 6 Jul 1969, 1; Lu Yung-shu, "Preparations for War in Mainland China," in Collected Documents of the First Sino-American Conference on Mainland China, Institute of International Studies, Taipei, Taiwan, 1971; Peking Review, 30 Oct 1969, 1
- [117] Peking Review, 7 Sep 1969, 6
- [118] Peking Review, 10 Oct 1969, 3-4
- [119] Far Eastern Economic Review, 2 Oct 1969, 3
- [120] Kissinger, The White House Years, 186-187
- [121] Ibid. 187-194
- [122] Washington Post, 18 Jan 1971. See also New York Times, 6 Jul 1969, 1; Lu Yung-shu, "Preparations for War in Mainland China," in Collected Documents on Mainland China, Institute of International Studies, Taipei, Taiwan, 1971
- [123] Kissinger, The White House Years, 187; Nixon, RN, Vol 1, 501-504

- [124] Kissinger, Henry, Years of Upheaval, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1982, 233; Nixon, RN, Vol II, 426-428
- [125] According to Henry Kissinger, "the Soviets encouraged India to exploit Pakistan's travail in part to deliver a blow to our system of alliances, in even greater measure to demonstrate Chinese impotence. Since it was a common concern about Soviet power that had driven Peking and Washington together, a demonstration of American irrelevance would severely strain our precarious new relationship with China." The Soviets promised to tie down the Chinese on the Sino-Soviet border while the Indians dismembered Pakistan. Thus, the U.S. readied a carrier task group for the Indian Ocean to "scare off an Indian attack on West Pakistan." Kissinger also wanted to have "forces in place in case the Soviet Union pressured China." As a result of U.S. diplomatic and military actions, the Soviets instead pressed India to abandon its plans to attack West Pakistan. Kissinger also wanted to have forces in place in case the Soviet Union pressured China." Kissinger also claims that it was Zhou Enlai's belief that the U.S. had saved Pakistan. See Kissinger, The White House Years, 842-918, especially pages 886, 905, and 913. For a similar but less detailed account see Nixon, RN, Vol I, 650-660. For a detailed account of U.S. and Soviet naval movements of the crisis see McConnell, James M. and Anne Kelly Calhoun, "The December 1971 Indo-Pakistan Crisis" in Soviet Naval Diplomacy, Dismukes and McConnell (eds.), 178-192

In his memoirs, Kissinger's assessment of Soviet motives in supporting North Vietnam's spring offensive in 1972 is less clear-cut than in the Indo-Pakistan conflict. Nevertheless, in discussing the offensive he does say: "If we collapsed in Vietnam, the patient design of our foreign policy would be in jeopardy. The Moscow summit would take place--if at all--against the background of two successful assaults on American interests made possible by Soviet weaponry (first India-Pakistan and now Indochina). Our negotiating position in the eyes of the cold calculators of power in the Kremlin would be pathetically weak. China might reconsider the value of American ties." And Nixon quotes Kissinger at the time as saying: "I think that what offends me most about the Soviets is their utter lack of subtlety....They're just trying to blacken China's eyes because of your trip. They want to increase their influence in Hanoi, but they don't see the danger of giving new toys [arms] to the North Vietnamese fanatics." In fact, the Soviets probably thought they had a great deal to gain by demonstrating that Moscow, not Beijing, held the balance in the Vietnam War. And China would find itself in the uncomfortable position of having to choose between Washington and Hanoi. However, once China leaned toward the U.S. by adopting a neutral stance when the U.S. struck back at North Vietnam, the Soviets could point out

to Hanoi: that without China's support the Soviet Union could do no more than send a small naval task group to counter Washington's mining of Haiphong. In turn, the Kremlin could woo Washington from Beijing by supporting U.S. peace efforts and by reaching an agreement with the U.S. on a SALT I treaty. Indeed, at the Moscow summit in the summer of 1972, Brezhnev began by complaining that the U.S. was trying to use the Chinese to bring pressure on the Soviets to intervene with the North Vietnamese. In his memoirs, Nixon claims that the summit ended with Brezhnev asking "would you [Nixon] like to have one of our highest Soviet officials go to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the interest of peace?" Kissinger, The White House Years, 1086-1257, especially 1098; Nixon, RN, Vol II, 59-104, especially 59 and 99. For an account of the Soviet naval response to the mining of Haiphong see Shulsky (ed.) "Coercive Naval Diplomacy," Soviet Naval Diplomacy, Dismukes and McConnell (eds.), 134

- [126] For the Soviet and Chinese official positions see Moscow, TASS, 30 Mar 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 1 Apr 1969, A1-A7; Moscow, TASS, 13 Jun 1969, FBIS: Soviet Union, 16 Jun 1969, A1-A9; Peking, NCNA, 24 May 1969, FBIS: China, 26 May 1969, A1-A10; Peking, NCNA, 7 Oct 1969, FBIS: China, 8 Oct 1969, A1-A2. According to A. Doak Barnett, the Chinese have not emphasized since 1974 their demand that the Soviets admit that the border is based on "unequal treaties." Barnett, China and the Major Powers, 75
- [127] Nixon, RN, Vol II, 59-104; Kissinger, The White House Years, 1096-1257; Lieberthal, Kenneth, Sino-Soviet Conflict in the 1970s: Its Evolution and Implications for the Strategic Triangle, RAND, Santa Monica, California, July 1978, R-2342-NA, 19. For an account of the Soviet military buildup in the early seventies see Robinson, "The Sino-Soviet Border Conflict," in Diplomacy of Power, Kaplan (ed.) 288-289
- [128] Asian Security, 1979, Research Institute for Peace and Security, Tokyo, Japan, 1979, 35-36, 45-46; Kissinger, The Years of Upheaval, 233; Robinson, "The Sino-Soviet Conflict," in The Diplomacy of Power, Kaplan (ed.), 289; Defense of Japan, 1979, Defense Agency, Tokyo, Japan, 1979, 50
- [129] For an account of Soviet and Chinese foreign policies and the Chinese power struggle in this period see Lieberthal, Sino-Soviet Conflict. Lieberthal tends to emphasize the expanding nature of Chinese contacts in this period. And they did seem remarkable when contrasted to the isolation of China during the Cultural Revolution. However, these contacts now seem very tentative compared to the expansive nature of Chinese foreign

policy following the death of Mao, the purge of the "Gang of Four," and the reemergence of Deng Xiaoping.

For the text of Deng's "Three World's Speech" see Peking Review, Supplement, 12 Apr 1974. And for a very interesting interpretation of China's counterencirclement strategy see Romance, Francis J., "Pekings Counter-Encirclement Strategy: The Maritime Element," Orbis, Summer 1976, 437-459

- [130] Moscow Radio, 13 Aug 1977, FBIS: Soviet Union, 15 Aug 1977, C1-C2
- [131] For example, Moscow Radio, 7 Jan 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 9 Jan 1978, C4-C5
- [132] Garrett, Banning, "China Policy and the Strategic Triangle" in Eagle Entangled: U.S. Foreign Policy in a Complex World, Kenneth A. Oye, Donald Rothchild and Robert J. Lieber (eds.), Longman Inc., New York 1979, 235-241
- [133] Ibid.
- [134] Talbott, Strobe, Endgame: The Inside Story of SALT II, Harper Colophon Books, New York 1979, 120-132; New York Times, 10 Oct 1977, 1
- [135] Moscow, Pravda, 1 Oct 1977, FBIS: Soviet Union, C1-C4
- [136] Moscow Radio, 5 Dec 1977, FBIS: Soviet Union, 6 Dec 1977, C1; Moscow, TASS, 10 Oct 1977, FBIS: Soviet Union, 11 Oct 1977, C1; Tokyo, Kyodo, 6 Nov 1977, FBIS: Soviet Union, 8 Nov 1977, C1; Moscow Radio, 18 Oct 1977, FBIS: Soviet Union, 19 Oct 1977, C1
- [137] Moscow Radio, 11 Oct 1977, FBIS: Soviet Union, 12 Oct 1977, C7-C8
- [138] For an account of the Somali-Ethiopian War see CNA Professional Paper 269, "The Soviet Involvement in the Ogaden War," by Kenneth G. Weiss, Feb 1980
- [139] Although written largely from a Vietnamese point of view, Nayan Chanda's account of the Kampuchean-Vietnamese border war is very illuminating. In discussing the origins of the dispute, he quotes a Vietnamese official as saying: "We insist on a special relationship [with Kampuchea] because there is not another example in history of such a relationship where the two people shared each grain of rice, every bullet, suffering and victory." And he quotes a Kampuchean diplomat as saying that Kampuchea wanted a "normal" and not a special relationship. Far Eastern Economic Review, 21 Apr 1978, 17-22. For a Chinese

- history of the conflict see Beijing, Xinhua, 3 Feb 1979, FBIS: China, A27-A29
- [140] Beijing, Xinhua, 3 Feb 1979, FBIS: China, 5 Feb 1979, A29
- [141] Asian Security 1979, 28
- [142] For example, Peking Review, 29 Sep 1978, 12-15; Renmin Ribao editorial, "A New Move in the Kremlin's Global Strategy"
- [143] Soviet involvement in the Horn of Africa and Southeast Asia clearly spurred China's efforts to expand its international contacts. Although the Chinese began to lay again the theoretical basis for such contacts in Hua's speech at the 11th CCP Congress in August 1977, the need for two elaborations of the concept, one in November 1977 and the other in January 1978, indicates that the Chinese were slow to revive their united front strategy until forced to do so by Soviet activism. Peking Review, 26 Aug 1977, 39-43; Peking Review, 1 Nov 1977; Peking Review, 3 Feb 1978, 5-11
- [144] Beijing, NCNA, 27 Jan 1978, FBIS: China, 26 Jan 1978, A6-A7; Beijing, NCNA, 3 Feb 1978, FBIS: China, 6 Feb 1978, A5-A6
- [145] At the time, it was thought that Deng Yingchao was attempting to mediate the conflict between Vietnam and Kampuchea. Yet the Chinese made little secret of the fact that they viewed Hanoi as the guilty party in the dispute. So Deng probably did not apply much pressure to Phnom Penh to settle the dispute. Rather her presence in Kampuchea was probably meant to signal China's support for Phnom Penh. As the widow of Zhou Enlai, Deng's prestige in China transcended the power struggle in the Zhongnanhai and her mission to Phnom Penh was meant to convey the message that the Chinese leadership was united in its support of Kampuchea. In addition, the Chinese had been urging the Kampuchean government to end its isolation, and it seems likely that her visit encouraged the Kampuchean leaders to welcome the Thai Foreign Minister's visit to Phnom Penh in early February. Beijing, NCNA, 26 Jan 1978, FBIS: China, 27 Jan 1978, A7-A10; Bangkok Radio, 30 Jan 1978, FBIS: AP, J1
- [146] Peking Review, 13 Jan 1978, 28-29; Peking Review, 7 Apr 1978, 4
- [147] Far Eastern Economic Review, 3 Feb 1978, 24-26; Beijing, NCNA, 19 Jan 1978, FBIS: China, 20 Jan 1978, A12-A13; Hong Kong, AFP, 21 Jan 1978, FBIS: China, 23 Jan 1978, A7-A8; Le Monde, 24 Jan 1978, 4-5; Moscow, TASS, 9 Feb 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 14 Feb 1978, C3

- [148] Peking Review, 24 Feb 1978, 4; Beijing, NCNA, 8 Mar 1978, FBIS: China, 10 Mar 1978, A12-A13; Tokyo, Kyodo, 20 Mar 1978, FBIS: China, 20 Mar 1978, A7; Paris, AFP, 14 Mar 1978, FBIS: China, 15 Mar 1978, A12-A14
- [149] Hong Kong, Hsin Wan Pao, 4 Feb 1978, FBIS: China, 10 Feb 1978, N2
- [150] Moscow, TASS, 23 Feb 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 23 Feb 1978, M1-M3
- [151] Asian Security, 41; Tokyo, Kyodo, 24 Feb 1978, FBIS: AP, 24 Feb 1978, C2
- [152] Tokyo, Kyodo, 24 Feb 1978, FBIS: AP, 24 Feb 1978, C2
- [153] CNA Professional Paper 269, "The Soviet Involvement in the Ogaden War," by Kenneth G. Weiss, February 1980, 3
- [154] Moscow, TASS, 19 Feb 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 21 Feb 1978, M1-M2; Moscow, TASS, 22 Feb 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 23 Feb 1978, B1
- [155] Asian Security 1979, 170-175
- [156] Asian Security 1979, 44
- [157] Moscow, TASS, 20 Mar 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 22 Mar 1978, C1-C2; Beijing, NCNA, 25 Mar 1978, FBIS: China, 27 Mar 1978, A8-A11
- [158] Hanoi Radio, 5 Feb 1978, FBIS: AP, 6 Feb 1978, K4-K6; Hanoi Radio, 13 Feb 1978, FBIS: AP, 14 Feb 1978, K1-K3
- [159] Vientiane Radio, 30 Jan 1978, FBIS: AP, 30 Jan 1978, I1
- [160] Far Eastern Economic Review, 25 Feb 1979, 33-34
- [161] Ibid.
- [162] Far Eastern Economic Review, 17 Mar 1978, 10; Ho Chi Minh City Radio, 23 Mar 1978, FBIS: AP, 27 Mar 1978, K5-K7; Far Eastern Economic Review, 14 Apr 1978, 11-12. Although they were first reported in March, the incidents apparently occurred in February 1978. Far Eastern Economic Review, 21 Apr 1978, 19
- [163] Far Eastern Economic Review, 21 Apr 1978, 17-22, Phnom Penh Radio, 10 May 1978, FBIS: AP, 12 May 1978

- [164] Tokyo, Kyodo, 12 Mar 1978, FBIS: AP, 13 Mar 1978, C3; Tokyo Kyodo, 16 Mar 1978, FBIS: AP, 16 Mar 1978, C5; Defense Agency, Defense of Japan 1978, 36
- [165] Tokyo, Kyodo, 17 Mar 1978, FBIS: AP, 17 Mar 1978, C1; Defense of Japan 1978, 34
- [166] Khabarovsk Radio, 5 Apr 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, , 5 Apr 1978, R1; Moscow Radio, 7 Apr 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 7 Apr 1978, R1
- [167] Moscow, TASS, 12 May 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 12 May 1978, C1
- [168] Indeed, while aboard the Admiral Senyavin, Brezhnev called on the U.S. to abandon the concept of linkage and complete a SALT II accord with the USSR. He also made a pointed reference to China's opposition to such an accord: "It is no secret that both to the West and to the East [China] of our frontiers there are forces which are interested in the arms race, in working up an atmosphere of fear and hostility. They sow doubts as to the possibility of taking practical steps to limit armaments and to achieve agreements in this field." Moscow, TASS, 7 Apr 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 7 Apr 1978, R2-R3. For an account of Vance's trip to Moscow and his success in winning Soviet concessions on the issue of cruise missile transfer see Talbott, Endgame, 147-153
- [169] Asian Security, 163
- [170] Moscow, TASS, 26 Apr 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 26 Apr 1978
- [171] Beijing, NCNA, 25 Mar 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 27 Mar 1978, A6-A8; Moscow, TASS, 31 Mar 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 3 Apr 1978, C1-C4
- [172] The point was not lost on Moscow since the Kremlin immediately took note of the announcement of Brzezinski's visit. Moscow, TASS, 26 Apr 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 26 Apr 1978, C1
- [173] Besides moving closer to China, Washington was also intent on dispelling the impression that the U.S. had lost interest in Asian security matters. To that end, the Administration announced at the end of April that the U.S. troop withdrawal from South Korea would be slowed and emphasized that U.S. Air Force strength would be increased.
- [174] Far Eastern Economic Review, 19 May 1978, 21-24
- [175] The Katangan invasion of Shaba occurred after Brzezinski's trip was announced. Nevertheless, the Administration's belief that the Soviets and Cubans were involved undoubtedly strengthened

Brzezinski's argument that Washington must play the China card to restrain Soviet adventurism. Indeed, after he returned from Beijing, Brzezinski publicly warned Moscow that if U.S.-Soviet relations continued to deteriorate, Washington would move closer to China. New York Times, 29 May 1978, 6. See also Garrett, "China Policy and the Strategic Triangle" in Eagle Entangled, Oye, Rothchild, and Lieber (eds.), 243-245

- [176] Previously, the Chinese had emphasized a military solution to their troubles with Taiwan. In another possible signal to the U.S., the Chinese suspended their ritualistic shelling of Taiwan's offshore islands to celebrate May day. Nevertheless, the Chinese were unwilling to abandon publicly the threat of military action against Taiwan. Hong Kong, Wen Wei Po, 20 May 1978, FBIS: China, 25 May 1978, N3-N4; Hong Kong, Ta Kung Pao, 1 May 1978, 29 Apr 1978, FBIS: China, 1 May 1978, E20
- [177] An article in the Hong Kong Communist press made much of Brzezinski's failure to visit Taiwan on his trip to Asia. Beijing was also pleased that Brzezinski snubbed Taipei by arriving in Beijing on the day Chiang Ching-Kuo was inaugurated President of the Republic of China. Hong Kong, Hsin Wan Pao, 26 May 1978, FBIS: China, 1 Jun 1978, N1; New York Times, 24 May 1978, A2
- [178] Brzezinski was not the only Westerner to visit Beijing and make provocative remarks about the Soviet Union. In early May, Britain's Chief of Defense Staff Air Marshal Sir Neil Cameron visited Beijing and declared that Britain and China shared "an enemy at our door whose capital is Moscow." Far Eastern Economic Review, 12 May 1978, 12-13
- [179] Apparently, COCOM restrictions were dropped in the spring, but the decision was not officially conveyed to the Zhongnanhai until Brzezinski's visit. However, the Chinese probably had an inkling of that decision when Sir Neil Cameron arrived in China in early May to discuss arms sales. Asian Security 1979, 66; Far Eastern Economic Review, 12 May 1978, 12-13
- [180] As part of his toast at the banquet on May 20, Brzezinski declared: "the President of the United States desires friendly relations with a strong China. He is determined to join you in overcoming the remaining obstacles in the way to full normalization of our relations within the framework of the Shanghai communique. The United States had made up its mind on the issue." Beijing, NCNA, 20 May 1978, FBIS: China, 22 May 1978, A3

As for the Sino-Japanese peace treaty, Prime Minister Fukuda apparently changed his ambiguous position toward

concluding the treaty after he returned from a summit meeting with President Carter in early May. Secretary of State Vance reportedly told Japanese Foreign Minister Sunao Sonoda that the U.S. favored the proposed Japan-China treaty. Thus, Brzezinski probably urged the Japanese as well to conclude the treaty after his successful trip to Beijing. Indeed, Tokyo may have been awaiting the outcome of Brzezinski's trip before announcing its intention to resume negotiations. Tokyo, Yomiuri Shimbun, 28 May 1978

- [181] Asian Security 1979, 162-163
- [182] Hong Kong, AFP, 27 May 1978, FBIS: China, 30 May 1978, A21; Tokyo, Kyodo, 2 Jun 1978, FBIS: AP, 5 Jun 1978, C1
- [183] Hong Kong, Hsin Wan Pao, 13 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, 16 Jun 1978, N1
- [184] Beijing, NCNA, 5 May 1978, FBIS: China, 5 May 1978, A5
- [185] Beijing, NCNA, 26 May 1978, FBIS: China, 26 May 1978, A37; Beijing, 9 Aug 1978, FBIS: China, 9 Aug 1978, A18
- [186] On a visit to China in early May, Salim Rubai Ali signed an economic and technical agreement with Beijing. Beijing, NCNA, 6 May 1978, FBIS: China, 10 May 1978, A20. Indeed, the Hong Kong Communist press implied that the Soviets instigated the coup against Rubai Ali because he was pro-Chinese. Hong Kong, Ta Kung Pao, 27 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, 7 Jul 1978, N1
- [187] Although Beijing recognized the Marxist government in Kabul, the Chinese were very concerned about its pro-Soviet orientation. At first, an article in the Hong Kong Communist press expressed the hope that Kabul would not "lean towards Moscow." Soon afterwards, another article described Afghanistan as part of a Soviet threat to Iran and West Asia including Saudi Arabia and Oman. Significantly, Vice Premier Chen Xilien and the PLA deputy chief of staff met with an Iranian military delegation visiting Beijing in May. A Chinese military delegation, in turn, visited Iran in early June. Presumably, Soviet hegemonism and Afghanistan were primary topics of conversation. The Chinese were also concerned about the threat posed by Afghanistan to Pakistan. To underline their support for Islamabad, the Chinese dispatched Vice Premier Geng Biao to Pakistan to mark the completion of the Karakorum highway. In his speech for the event, Geng Biao said that the Chinese "unswervingly support the Pakistan Government and people in their just struggle to safeguard national independence and sovereignty." Significantly, Geng Biao emphasized that there was now a land, as well as an aerial bridge between Pakistan and

China. During the Indo-Pakistan War, China's ability to aid Islamabad was severely limited by the winter snows in the Himalayas. There were also reports in June that the PRC was trying to establish diplomatic ties with Saudi Arabia. Beijing apparently wanted to create a zone of containment against the Soviet Union along China's southwestern border, the Indian Ocean, and the Persian Gulf. Beijing, NCNA, 8 May 1978, FBIS: China, 8 May 1978, A18; Hong Kong, Wen Wei Po, 9 May 1978, FBIS: China, 11 May 1978, N1; Hong Kong, Wen Wei Po, 17 May 1978, FBIS: China, 19 May 1978, N1; Beijing, NCNA, 24 May 1978, FBIS: China, 25 May 1978, A21; Beijing, NCNA, 8 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, 9 Jun 1978, A35; Beijing, 18 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, 19 Jun 1978, A17; Kissinger, The White House Years, 914; Rome, ANSA, 23 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, 26 Jun 1978, A26.

- [188] Tokyo, Kyodo, 3 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, 5 Jun 1978, A12; Tokyo, JPS, 6 Jun 1978; Far Eastern Economic Review, 16 Jun 1978, 10. The Laotian government's anti-Chinese actions under pressure from Hanoi probably precipitated the cut-off in Chinese aid to Vientiane. Far Eastern Economic Review, 16 Jun 1978, 11-12. In an interview with Thai newsmen on June 9, Deng Xiaoping indicated that Chinese aid in food, clothing, and weapons during Vietnam's wars with France and the U.S. had totalled 30,000 million yuan (or some \$10 billion). Soviet aid, mainly arms, had begun later and had not been as extensive. Bangkok, National Review, 9 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, 9 Jun 1978. The rest of China's aid to Vietnam was terminated after Vietnam joined COMECON in July. Far Eastern Economic Review, 14 Jul 1978, 6
- [189] In May, the Vietnamese began emphasizing combat readiness for their air defense, naval, and military units in the north. They also claimed that Chinese aircraft were violating Vietnamese air space. The Chinese took note of Vietnamese military preparations and indicated cryptically that they were also improving their capabilities. Hanoi Radio, 6 May 1978, FBIS: AP, 10 May 1978, K22-K23; Hanoi Radio, 8 Jun 1978, FBIS: AP, 9 Jun 1978, K5-K10; Hanoi Quan Doi Nhan Dan, 31 May 1978, FBIS: AP, 29 Jun 1978, K14-K15; Hong Kong AFP, 19 Jun 1978, FBIS: AP, 19 Jun 1978, K1; Hong Kong, AFP, 26 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, 27 Jun 1978, A8; Hanoi, VNA, 27 Jun 1978; Hanoi Radio, 1 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, 8 Jun 1978, K13-K14
- [190] There were a flurry of reports regarding increased Soviet involvement in Vietnam at this time. Although the details of that involvement are unclear, the general thrust of the reports was probably correct. Moscow was providing Vietnam military aid in the hope of gaining access to Vietnamese ports and improving the Kremlin's military and political position vis-a-vis China. For example, Tokyo, Kyodo, 7 Jun 1978, FBIS: AP, 7 Jun 1978, K10-K11; Tokyo, Asahi Shimbun, 7 Jun 1978, 7; Hong Kong, Wen Wei

- Po, 14 Jun 1978, FBIS: AP, 16 Jun 1978, K2; Hanoi, VNA, 30 Jun 1978; Hong Kong, AFD, 29 Jun 1978, FBIS: AP, 30 Jun 1978, K1; Tokyo, Kyodo, 30 Jun 1978, FBIS: AP, 30 Jun 1978, K1-K2; Hong Kong, Wen Wei Po, 22 May 1978, FBIS: China, 25 May 1978, N1; Hong Kong, AFP, 26 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, 27 Jun 1978, A8-A9
- [191] Defense of Japan 1979, 39; Paris, AFP, 1 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, 2 Jun 1978, A12-A13; Hong Kong, Wen Wei Po, 2 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, 7 Jun 1978, N1-N2; Moscow, Pravda, 13 Jun 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 15 Jun 1978, C1-C6; Moscow, Komsomskaya Pravda, 16 Jun 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 22 Jun 1978, C4
- [192] Hong Kong; Wen Wei Po, 2 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, 7 Jun 1978, N1-N2
- [193] For more information regarding this important PLA work conference see Peking, NCNA, 29 May 1978, FBIS: China, 30 May 1978, E1-E5; Peking, NCNA, 27 May 1978, FBIS: China, 30 May 1978, E6-E7; Peking, NCNA, 27 May 1978, FBIS: China, 30 May 1978, E7-E11; Peking, NCNA, 25 May 1978, FBIS: China, 2 Jun 1978, E1-E4; Peking, NCNA, 26 May 1978, FBIS: China, 2 Jun 1978, Peking, NCNA, 28 May 1978, FBIS: China, 2 Jun 1978, E6; Peking, NCNA, 2 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, 5 Jun 1978, E1-E5; Peking, NCNA, 3 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, 5 Jun 1978, E5-E12; Peking, NCNA, 4 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, 5 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, E1-E10; Peking, NCNA, 6 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, 7 Jun 1978, E1-E2; Peking, People's Daily, 31 May 1978, FBIS: China, 7 Jun 1978, E1-E2. Interestingly, the Chinese played up the efforts of PLA navy submarine 233 on a recent cruise to achieve the goals of the work conference by reaching "a higher level of training or war preparedness." Peking, NCNA, 27 May 1978, FBIS: China, 2 Jun 1978, E7-E8
- [194] Moscow Radio, 7 Jun 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 8 Jun 1978, C2; Far Eastern Economic Review, 14 Jul 1978, 6-9; South China Morning Post, 14 Jun 1978, 1; Hanoi Radio, 19 Jun 1978, FBIS: AP, 19 Jun 1978, K21; Moscow Radio, 18 Jun 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 20 Jun 1978, C1; Moscow Radio, 17 Jul 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 20 Jul 1978, C1
- [195] Defense of Japan 1978, 37-38; Asian Security 1979, 42-43; Kyodo, 7 Jun 1978, FBIS: AP, 8 Jun 1978, C3; Kyodo, 29 Jun 1978, FBIS: AP, 29 Jun 1978, C1; Kyodo, 19 Jun 1978, FBIS: AP, 19 Jun 1978, C1
- [196] The Japanese protested the Soviet activities to little avail. Kyodo, 7 Jun 1978, FBIS: AP, 8 Jun 1978, C1; Kyodo, 8 Jun 1978, FBIS: AP, 8 Jun 1978, C1-C2
- [197] Tokyo, Asahi Evening News, 10 Jun 1978, 2

- [198] Blue Force Deployments, 19 Jun 1978, Unclassified
- [199] Talbott, Endgame, 208
- [200] Talbott, Endgame, 156-163
- [201] The Administration failed to normalize relations with Hanoi because it was disturbed about the build-up of Vietnamese forces on the Kampuchean border, the exodus of refugees from Vietnam, and the increasingly close relations between Moscow and Hanoi. Also, Washington was unwilling to allow efforts to normalize relations with Vietnam to disrupt similar efforts at normalizing relations with China. Far Eastern Economic Review, 21 Jul 1978, 5; Far Eastern Economic Review, 25 Dec 1981, 19
- [202] Far Eastern Economic Review, 12 May 1978, 52, 55
- [203] Tokyo, Kyodo, 1 Aug 1978, FBIS: AP, C1; Tokyo, Kyodo, 12 Aug 1978, FBIS: AP, 14 Aug 1978, C1-C2; Peking, NCNA, 13 Aug 1978, FBIS: China, 14 Aug 1978, A13-A15; Peking, NCNA, 12 August 1978, FBIS: China, 14 Aug 1978, A5
- [204] Tokyo, Yomiuri Shimbun, 20 Apr 1978, 2
- [205] Far Eastern Economic Review, 16 Jun 1978, 7
- [206] Hong Kong, Wen Wei Po, 2 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, 7 Jun 1978, N1-N2
- [207] Hong Kong, AFP, 1 Jun 1978, FBIS: China, 1 Jun 1978, A6-A7; Far Eastern Economic Review, 15 Sep 1978, 8; Far Eastern Economic Review, 6 Oct 1978, 8-10
- [208] New York Times, 1 Jul 1978, 2; Far Eastern Economic Review, 15 Sep 1978, 8
- [209] Moscow, TASS, 14 Aug 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 15 Aug 1978, M1; Tokyo, Kyodo, 8 Sep 1978, FBIS: AP, 8 Sep 1978, C1
- [210] Moscow, TASS, 8 Sep 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 11 Sep 1978 M4-M5
- [211] Tokyo, Kyodo, 6 Sep 1978, FBIS: AP, 6 Sep 1978, C1; Tokyo, Kyodo, 6 Sep 1978, C1-C2; Tokyo, Kyodo, 13 Sep 1978, FBIS: AP, 13 Sep 1978, C3
- [212] Moscow, Izvestiya, 25 Aug 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 30 Sep 1978, M3-M5
- [213] Tokyo, JPS, 22 Nov 1978

- [214] Tokyo, Sankei Shimbun, 20 Sep 1978, 1
- [215] Tallin-Sovetskaya Estoniya (NOVOSTI), 19 Sep 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 29 Sep 1978, B7
- [216] Moscow, TASS, 21 Aug 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 22 Aug 1978, D1; Moscow, TASS, 24 Aug 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 25 Aug 1978, D1; Moscow, TASS, 30 Aug 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 31 Aug 1978, F5
- [217] New York Times, 22 Nov 1978, 50; New York Times, 30 Nov 1978, 10
- [218] For example, the Chinese denounced the Soviet's I Aleksandrov article and began emphasizing China's vigilance along the Sino-Soviet border. In fact, the Chinese invited reporters from Macao and Hong Kong to visit Chenpao, the scene of the initial Sino-Soviet clashes in 1969. Hong Kong, Ta Kung Pao, 12 Jul 1978, FBIS: China, 14 Jul 1978, N1; Hong Kong, Ta Kung Pao, 16 Jul 1978, FBIS: China, 18 Jul 1978, N1; Hong Kong, Wen Wei Po, 13 Jul 1978, FBIS: China, 18 Jul 1978, N1-N2; Hong Kong, Ta Kung Pao, 15 Jul 1978, FBIS: China, 18 Jul 1978, N2; Hong Kong, Ta Kung Pao, 12 Jul 1978, FBIS: China, 18 Jul 1978, N2-N3
- [219] Far Eastern Economic Review, 8 Sep 1978, 10-11
- [220] Tokyo, Asahi Shimbun, 7 Sep 1978, 7; Peking, NCNA, 26 Sep 1978, FBIS: China, 27 Sep 1978, A7-A8
- [221] Far Eastern Economic Review, 11 Aug 1978, 18-19; Far Eastern Economic Review, 29 Sep 1978, 5
- [222] Far Eastern Economic Review, 15 Sep 1978, 21. Hanoi had also expressed an interest in joining ASEAN. Far Eastern Economic Review, 11 Aug 1978, 5
- [223] Jakarta, Antara, 27 Oct 1978, FBIS: AP, 27 Oct 1978, N1; Hong Kong, AFP, 24 Oct 1978, FBIS: AP, P1-P2; Bangkok Post, 30 Oct 1978, FBIS: AP, 30 Oct 1978, J5; Phnom Pen Radio, 29 Oct 1978, FBIS: AP, 30 Oct 1978, H1
- [224] Tokyo, Kyodo, 25 Oct 1978, FBIS: AP, 26 Oct 1978, C9; Tokyo, Kyodo, 14 Dec 1978, FBIS: AP, 14 Dec 1978, C1
- [225] Tokyo, Kyodo, 23 Oct 1978, FBIS: AP, 23 Oct 1978, C1-C2; Tokyo, Kyodo, 23 Oct 1978, FBIS: AP, 23 Oct 1978, C4-C5
- [226] New York Times, 16 Dec 1978, 1
- [227] Moscow, Pravda, 4 Nov 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 6 Nov 1978, 66; Hanoi, VNA, 3 Nov 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 6 Nov 1978, L6-L9; Moscow Radio, 5 Dec 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 5 Dec 1978, J2;

Moscow, TASS, 5 Dec 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, J10-J13. For the Chinese, even the Friendship and Cooperation treaty the Soviets signed with Ethiopia had an anti-China bent. The Zhongnanhai apparently believes that Soviet involvement in Ethiopia is part of Moscow's effort to control the "bow-shaped navigation line" to isolate the West and China. Moscow, TASS, 20 Nov 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 21 Nov 1978, H6-H8; Beijing People's Daily, 7 Jul 1978, FBIS: China, 17 Jul 1978, A4-A6; Beijing, Hongqi, FBIS: China, 18 Feb 1982, C1-C3

- [228] Asian Security 1979, 46, 144; Jencks, Harlan W., "China's 'Punitive' War on Vietnam: A Military Assessment," Asian Survey, August 1978, 806
- [229] Asian Security 1979, 97-98
- [230] The Vietnamese were undoubtedly aware that a Friendship treaty with Moscow and the invasion of Kampuchea would cost Hanoi dearly. That is why the Vietnamese were intent on normalizing relations with the U.S. and gaining Japan and ASEAN's support before the invasion.
- [231] By 1980, Vietnam had become extremely dependent on Soviet economic and military support. For a sense of that cost to the Soviet Union see Pike, Douglas, "Vietnam in 1980: The Gathering Storm," Asian Survey, Jan 1981, 89-90
- [232] In their commentaries on the Chinese power struggle, the Soviets noted that Deng was gaining the upper hand over Hua Guofeng. At the end of November, they correctly predicted that Deng would increase his power at the Third Central Committee meeting in December 1978. Moscow also noted the importance of Deng's role in fostering a closer relationship among China, the ASEAN countries, Japan, and especially the United States. On the other hand, they pointed out that there were differences between Hua and Deng on the "development of relations with the USA and other countries as well as on other issues." Thus, Moscow probably hoped that the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea would be a blow to Deng, since he was in the forefront of Chinese efforts to form a coalition against the Soviet Union. Moscow, TASS, 28 Oct 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 1 Nov 1978, C1-C2; Moscow Radio, 15 Nov 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 16 Nov 1978, C2; Moscow, TASS, 26 Oct 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 27 Oct 1978, M1-M4; Moscow Radio, 18 Dec 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 19 Dec 1978, DD5-DD6; Moscow, TASS, 28 Dec 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 28 Dec 1978, C1-C4
- [233] Although they predicted that Deng would enhance his power at the December Central Committee meeting, the Soviets claimed that the victory of Hua or Deng's faction would be disastrous for the

Chinese people (and presumably for the Soviet Union). After the party meeting, the Soviets emphasized their belief that the power struggle continued, even though Deng had gained the upper hand. They also charged that Washington feared that Chinese disunity would dilute Beijing's anti-Soviet stance. The Soviets went on to claim that "the political struggle is taking place on two levels: the internicine struggle within the Beijing elite, and at the grass roots a growing movement by the leading people's forces in favor of a return to socialism and a genuine break with Maoism." The article went on to reiterate the Soviet offer to normalize relations on the basis of the principles of peaceful coexistence. However, it is possible that the Soviets were also pinning their hopes on the power struggle as well as the Chinese people. Although the Soviets identified a three-way power struggle among Deng, Hua, and Ye Jianying, the Soviets rarely commented on Ye, the "grand old man" of the PLA. It is possible that Moscow hoped that Ye would prevent either Hua or Deng's faction from triumphing entirely thereby keeping China's leadership disunited and vulnerable. Optimally, it is also possible that they hoped, as in 1968-1969, that latent pro-Soviet sentiment in the PLA would make Ye amenable to a rapprochement with Moscow. Or continued factional infighting would make one of the factions, if not Ye's, turn to the Soviets for support in the leadership struggle--using the argument that Chinese hostility was provoking Moscow and damaging Chinese interests. Moscow, TASS, 28 Oct 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 1 Nov 1978, C1-C2; Moscow, TASS, 28 Dec 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 28 Dec 1978, C1-C2; Moscow Radio, 3 Jan 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 5 Jan 1979, C1; Moscow, Literaturnaya Gazetta, 10 Jan 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 17 Jan 1979, C1-C2

[234] After the U.S. and China normalized relations, Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev charged in an interview in Time magazine that "there are some in the U.S. and other countries who have found the course hostile toward the Soviet Union followed by the present Chinese leadership so much to their liking that they are tempted to turn Peking into an instrument of pressure on world socialism. Such a policy appears to me to be adventurous and highly dangerous for the cause of universal peace.

"The point is not at all the establishment of diplomatic relations. The point is that attempts are being made to encourage in every way...those who, while heading one of the biggest countries in the world, have openly declared their hostility to the cause of detente, disarmament and stability in the world, those who lay claims to the territories of many countries and stage provocations against them, those who have proclaimed war inevitable and mounted active preparations for war. It is really difficult to understand that this means playing with fire?" Time, 22 Jan 1979, 22. For some other

examples see Moscow, TASS, 27 Oct 1978, FBIS: Soviet Union, 8 Jan 1979, C1-C2; Moscow Radio, 17 Mar 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 19 Mar 1979, A3-A4

[235] As Brezhnev put it: "The Kampuchean people have risen to fight a hateful regime, to fight a tyranny imposed on them from outside. It's their right, and the Soviet public supports the just struggle of Kampuchea led by the Front for National Salvation...."

As far as China is concerned, I believe that you know as well as I do what the policy of their present leadership is. Truly, I am sick and tired of talking about China. I can only say that there existed a pro-Peking regime in Kampuchea which was nothing but the Chinese 'Cultural Revolution' in action on foreign territory. Chinese propaganda is making a lot of noise about the intervention of Vietnam into Kampuchean affairs. It is a gross attempt to distort the real state of affairs. It is another example of the anti-Vietnamese chauvinistic nature of the policy of the present Chinese leadership, which also organizes other anti-Vietnamese provocations." Time, 22 Jan 1979, 25

[236] Moscow, Pravda, 25 Jan 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 31 Jan 1979, L1-L2

[237] Talbott, Endgame, 246-248

[238] Asian Security 1979, 106-111

[239] New York Times, 31 Jan 1979, 1

[240] In speaking of China's decision to challenge the Soviet Union and punish Vietnam, Deng Xiaoping said: "If someone should ask us if we were scared, frankly speaking, we were indeed scared. But the important thing is whether this being afraid can be of any help. If, on the other hand, fear makes us lose advantage and a war breaks out because of it, we had better not be fearful. Tokyo, Yomiuri Shimbun, 30 Mar 1980, 3

[241] In the same interview with the Yomiuri Shimbun, Deng said: "Needless to say, the Soviet Union's strategic emphasis is on Europe, but in recent years it has been placing emphasis on the Asian and Pacific region. As they counter mounting obstacles in Western Europe, the Soviets have advanced their schedule and increased their emphasis on the East. As a result, they utilize Vietnam in the East and, in combination of forming an Indochina federation, they try to build an Asian security system in a joint effort by big and small hegemonism. At the same time, the Soviet Union has strengthened its Pacific Fleet so that it now

equals the U.S. Pacific Fleet in strength." Tokyo, Yomiuri Shimbun, 30 Mar 1980, 3

- [242] Deng Xiaoping noted in an interview with Time magazine that "the first characteristics of the Soviet Union is that it always adopts the attitude of bullying the soft and fearing the strong. The second characteristic of the Soviet Union is that it will go in and grab at every opportunity." Time, 5 Feb 1979, 34. See also reference 239
- [243] In an attempt to signal that China's leadership was united in support of Kampuchea, the Zhongnanhai dispatched a delegation to Phnom Penh in early November. The delegation was headed by Wang Dongxing, an ally of Hua Guofeng. Another member of the delegation was Hu Yaobang, a Deng supporter. (When Wang Dongxing and three other members of the "little gang of four" were ousted from the Politburo in February 1980, Hu Yaobang, a somewhat obscure member of the Politburo Standing Committee became General Secretary of the newly revived CCP Central Committee Secretariat, eventually replacing Hua Guofeng as head of the Party.) In Phnom Penh, Wang declared "the Chinese government and people resolutely support the Kampuchean people's just struggle in defense of their independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity." It turn, Ye Jianying, the third important figure in the power struggle according to Moscow, sent a letter to Phnom Penh on 5 Dec 1978 stating that "the Chinese government and people...totally support the Kampuchean people's just struggle against aggression by the Vietnamese expansionists." Phnom Penh Radio, 5 Nov 1978, FBIS: AP, 6 Nov 1978, H2-H3; Phnom Penh Radio, 5 Nov 1978, FBIS: AP, 6 Nov 1978, H3-H4; Phnom Penh Radio, 8 Dec 1978, FBIS: AP, 11 Dec 1978, H2; Beijing, Xinhua, 29 Feb 1980, FBIS: China, 29 Feb 1980, L1-L5. For an overview of factional alignments in PRC politics at this time see Chang, Parris H., "Chinese Politics: Deng's Turbulent Quest," Problems of Communism, January/February 1981, 1-21
- [244] In talking about Soviet strategy, Deng pointed out again in his interview with the Yomiuri Shimbun, "China meted out punishment to Vietnam last year not just for China's interests. The world was afraid of touching the tiger's arse but we did it. As a result, we found that we can do it." Tokyo, Yomiuri Shimbun, 3 Mar 1980, 3. See also reference 239
- [245] During his talks with former Prime Minister Fukuda in Japan following his tour of the U.S., Deng Xiaoping said: "The Soviet Union is taking the offensive in every field, and U.S. countermeasures are not very effective. A clear-cut response must be given to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is linked to the 'Cuba in the East' [Vietnam]. It also is interfering in

Iranian affairs. I do not believe that the situation in Iran is out of control yet. The United States has expressed the fear that the Iranian situation may touch off a chain reaction in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. It is China's view that if we remain mere onlookers regarding the Cambodian development, the Soviet Union will stretch its arms into the association of Southeast Asian nations. Once the Soviet Union completes establishing strategic points on a global scale, there can be no stability in the Asian-Pacific region. Tokyo, Nihon Keizai, 7 Feb 1979, 2

[246] Ibid.

[247] Jencks, Harlan W., "China's 'Punitive' War on Vietnam: A Military Assessment," Asian Survey, August 1979, 805

[248] For example, Jencks, "China's 'Punitive' War on Vietnam: A Military Assessment," Asian Survey, August 1979, 803; Larkin, Bruce D., "China and Asia: The Year of the China-Vietnam War," Current History, Sep 1979, 55; Donnel, John C., "Vietnam 1979: Year of Calamity," Asian Survey, 1980, 24

[249] The day before the invasion the Chinese Foreign Ministry established Vietnamese border provocations as the "casus belli:" "The Chinese governments feels immensely indignant at the grave incidents repeatedly created by the Vietnamese authorities along the Sino-Vietnamese border and lodges the strongest protest with the Vietnamese government....The Chinese side warns the Vietnamese authorities in all seriousness that they must immediately and completely stop all their armed provocations..., or they should bear full responsibility for all the consequences arising there from." Beijing, Xinhua, 16 Feb 1979, FBIS: China, 16 Feb 1979, A2-A3

[250] Indeed, Deng Xiaoping said in an interview during the conflict: "The proposal [the simultaneous withdrawal of Chinese troops from Vietnam and Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea] has been made by a number of countries, including Japan and the United States, and we approve of it wholeheartedly. It would be simple for the Chinese troops to withdraw from Vietnam. The problem is Vietnam would not withdraw its troops from Cambodia. The only way to make Vietnamese troops withdraw from Cambodia is for Cambodia to drive out the Vietnamese. The idea of simultaneous withdrawal is very good. But we would not make the simultaneous Chinese and Vietnamese withdrawal a bargaining condition." Tokyo, Mainichi Shimbun, 27 Feb 1979, 4

[251] In September 1978, Deng answered the charge that China's aid cut-off to Vietnam had forced Hanoi into the Soviet camp by saying: "China didn't drive Vietnam into the Soviet camp. We gave Vietnam \$20 billion in aid [figure adjusted for inflation];

nevertheless, Vietnam joined the Soviet camp a long time ago. The Soviet Union should now shoulder this burden alone. Vietnam had effectively been utilizing Sino-Soviet relations; now that China has quit Vietnam, Vietnam will have only the Soviet Union to depend upon, and, the longer it does so the more problems it will have. The Soviet Union ships military supplies to Vietnam but cannot afford to give it enough daily necessities...." And in March 1980, Deng claimed: "The Kampuchean situation is far better than anticipated. Vietnam tried to exterminate the government of Democratic Kampuchea at one sweep....Now, on the contrary, Democratic Kampuchea has become stronger....Vietnam today exists on Soviet aid amounting to daily average of \$2.5 million and faces mounting difficulties." That the Chinese were consciously adding to Vietnam's military burden by undertaking the incursion is indicated by Deng's statement that the lesson he wished Hanoi would learn is that "they cannot run about at will." In other words, Hanoi would have to think seriously about defending its northern border, and thus Vietnam's military burden in the north would help constrain its actions elsewhere. Tokyo, Asahi Shimbun, 7 Sep 1978, 7. Tokyo, Yomiuri Shimbun, 30 Mar 1980; Tokyo, Mainichi Shimbun, 27 Feb 1979, 4. See also Porter, Gareth, "The Great Power Triangle in Southeast Asia," Current History, Dec 1980, 162. For an account of the problems Vietnam has incurred as a result of its military burdens see Pike, Douglas, "Vietnam in 1980: The Gathering Storm?," Asian Survey, Jan 1981, 84-92

[252] As Deng put it: "In deciding to launch military action against Vietnam we were ready to take certain risks and made sufficient preparations. Because our objective is limited and fighting will not last long, most probably these risks will not materialize, although we cannot rule out the possibility of a Soviet attack on China....The Vietnamese expected help from 'those who pulled the string behind them and depended on the [Sino-Vietnamese] treaty. But if we were to be afraid of that, other people would think we were soft. Frankly, when we made up our mind [to fight], we kind of thought 'let's see for ourselves if the Chinese will have a nervous breakdown.'" Tokyo, Mainichi Shimbun, 27 Feb 1979, 4

[253] Chinese military leaders told Japanese reporters in September 1978 that "there are some factors which make it difficult for the Soviet Union to wage a war against China. First, the Soviet Union needs to obtain an assurance of security from the West. Second, it will find it necessary to conduct a large-scale military mobilization because a million men [in the border area] will not be sufficient in a war with China." Since the Chinese were planning a quick strike and withdrawal, they could hope to be out of Vietnam long before the Soviets could mobilize for a war with China. They could even hope to escape, if not rule

out, the possibility of limited Soviet military retaliation.
Tokyo, Mainichi Shimbun, 13 Sep 1978, 9

- [254] For example, New York Times, 1 Feb 1979, A1; Tokyo, Asahi Shimbun, 4 Feb 1979, 3; New York Times, 8 Feb 1979, A12
- [255] Moscow, TASS, 1 Feb 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 2 Feb 1979, B1. See also Kosygin's complaints about Deng's remarks in New York Times, 10 Feb 1979, 3
- [256] Beijing, Xinhua, 18 Feb 1979, FBIS: China, 22 Feb 1979, A16
- [257] New York Times, 14 Feb 1979, A3; Jencks, "China's 'Punitive' War," Asian Survey, August 1979, 806; Urumqi Xinjiang Radio, 9 Jan 1979, FBIS: China, 10 Jan 1979, M2-M3; Far Eastern Economic Review, 23 Feb 1979, 32-33
- [258] Asian Security 1979, 114-115
- [259] For several good analyses of the Chinese incursion see Asian Security 1979, 114-124 and Jencks, "China's 'Punitive' War," Asian Survey, Aug 1979, 801-815
- [260] Ibid.
- [261] For example, Paris, AFP, 21 Feb 1979, FBIS: China, 22 Feb 1979, E2-E3; Belgrade, Tanjug, 21 Feb 1979, FBIS: China, 23 Feb 1979, A11
- [262] Beijing, Xinhua, 27 Mar 1979, FBIS: China, 29 Mar 1979, C1-C2
- [263] Jencks, "China's 'Punitive' War," Asian Survey, Aug 1979, 808
- [264] Whiting, Allen S., The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indochina, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor 1975, XI
- [265] For example, Asian Security 1979, 120
- [266] Ibid., 98, 106
- [267] Soviet naval forces, split as they were into two task groups, were highly vulnerable to PRC air and naval strikes
- [268] For example, Beijing, NCNA, 9 Dec 1978, FBIS: China, 11 Dec 1978, A8-A9; Hanoi Radio, 10 Dec 1978, FBIS: AP, 11 Dec 1978 K8
- [269] New York Times, 14 Feb 1979, 1979, A3; New York Times, 19 Feb 1979, 10; Far Eastern Economic Review, 23 Feb 1979, L3; Washington Post, 9 Feb 1979, A1; China and the United States:

Report of Senator Henry M. Jackson to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, Oct 1979, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1979

- [270] Far Eastern Economic Review, 23 Feb 1979, 32-33
- [271] New York Times, 17 Mar 1979, 3
- [272] New York Times, 26 Feb 1979, A4; New York Times, 28 Feb 1979, A4; Asian Security 1979, 45. See also Center for Naval Analyses Memorandum, (CNA)80-0558.09, "The Political Significance of the Minsk Group's Deployment, 25 Feb-1 Jul 1979," by Cdr. Bruce Watston, 18 Apr 1980, Unclassified
- [273] For some accounts of Soviet naval involvement see Defense of Japan 1979, 38-40; Asian Security 1979, 44-45, 118, 120; New York Times, 8 Feb 1979, A13; New York Times, 20 Feb 1979, A6; New York Times, 21 Feb 1979, A1; New York Times, 22 Feb 1979, A1, A8; New York Times, 23 Feb 1979, A11; New York Times, 24 Feb 1979, A4; New York Times, 28 Feb 1979, A4
- [274] Ibid.; Jiefangjun Bao, 4 Apr 1980, 1
- [275] Defense of Japan 1979, 38-40
- [276] Asian Security 1979, 120; TRW Space Log, 1978-1979, TRW Defense and Space Systems Group, 1980, 64
- [277] Asian Security 1979, 45; New York Times, 23 Feb 1979, A11; New York Times, 24 Feb 1979, A4; New York Times, 25 Feb 1979, 1
- [278] For example, Moscow, TASS, 19 Feb 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 21 Feb 1979, L5; Moscow Radio, 26 Feb 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 27 Feb 1979, C4-C5; Moscow Radio, 1 Mar 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 5 Mar 1979, B2-B3; Moscow Radio, 17 Mar 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 19 Mar 1979, A3-A4; Baku Bakinskiy Rabochiy, 24 Mar 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 6 Mar 1979, R1; Pravda, 12 Feb 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 26 Feb 1979, E1
- [279] Moscow, TASS, 26 Feb 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 27 Feb 1979, C1-C2
- [280] For the text of President Carter's speech at Georgia Tech see New York Times, 21 Feb 1979, A4. Significantly, Carter mentioned that the U.S. could talk to all parties in the conflict indicating that the U.S. was trying to play mediator in the crisis.
- [281] New York Times, 23 Feb 1979, 10; New York Times, 24 Feb 1979, 5

- [282] New York Times, 18 Feb 1979, 10
- [283] New York Times, 28 Feb 1979, 6
- [284] New York Times, 1 Mar 1982, A8
- [285] New York Times, 8 Feb 1979, 7. According to the New York Times, President Carter said in an interview that he had warned the Soviets and the Vietnamese not to threaten Thailand. New York Times, 18 Jan 1979, A3. In his speech at Georgia Tech, Carter reiterated U.S. determination to stand by those countries which depend on U.S. for security. New York Times, 21 Feb 1979, 4
- [286] Moscow, Pravda, 22 Feb 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 26 Feb 1979, B1-B2; Moscow, TASS, 26 Feb 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 27 Feb 1979, C1-C2
- [287] Moscow, Pravda, 20 Feb 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 22 Feb 1979, C5-C7; Moscow Radio, 14 Feb 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 15 Feb 1979, B1-B2; Moscow, Literaturnaya Gazetta, 21 Feb 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 26 Feb 1979, C6-C7
- [288] Blue Force Deployments, 20 Feb 1979, Unclassified; Blue Force Deployments, 21 Feb 1979, Unclassified
- [289] See Blue Force Deployments from 26 Feb 1979 to 12 Mar 1979, Unclassified. Interestingly, the Sterett and a destroyer visited Phattya, Thailand on 5 Mar 1979 and operated in the Gulf of Thailand before joining the Constellation for the trip to the Gulf of Aden
- [290] Hong Kong, Wen Wei Po, 27 Feb 1979, FBIS: China, 2 Mar 1979, N1-N2
- [291] Defense of Japan 1979, 55. Moscow, Krasnaya Zvezda, 20 Mar 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 23 Mar 1979, C1. In Feb 1979, the U.S. also announced that it was suspending troop withdrawals from the Korean peninsula. Asian Security 1979, 137
- [292] For the Japanese perception of the importance of Korea to Japan's security see Asian Security 1979, 151-152
- [293] New York Times, 27 Feb 1979, A10
- [294] Moscow, TASS, 26 Feb 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 27 Feb 1979, C1-C2
- [295] Ibid.
- [296] New York Times, 6 Mar 1979, 1

- [297] Moscow, TASS, 14 Mar 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 15 Mar 1979, J6-J7; Moscow Radio, 13 Mar 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 14 Mar 1979, B1; Moscow, TASS, 13 Mar 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 14 Mar 1979, F5; Moscow, Pravda, 12 Mar 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, F11-F12; Moscow, Pravda, 14 Mar 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 19 Mar 1979, A2-A3. Significantly, in reporting the dispatch of the Constellation to the Gulf of Aden, and the decision to speed arms to North Yemen, Xinhua cited a congressional source in the Washington Post as saying: "There is a feeling that [President] Carter is drawing the line to stop the Russians and Cubans in North Yemen. He seems to think that the progression from Angola through Ethiopia has to be stopped here." Beijing, Xinhua, 8 Mar 1979, FBIS: China, 9 Mar 1979, A2. See also Fn 185
- [298] New York Times, 17 Feb 1979, A1; New York Times, 25 Feb 1979, 11; New York Times, 26 Feb 1979, A3; New York Times, 28 Feb 1979, A7; New York Times, 1 Mar 1979, A3; New York Times, 7 Mar 1979, A1; New York Times, 10 Mar 1979, 1; Moscow, Liturnaya Gazetta, 31 Jan 1979, FBIS: Soviet Union, 2 Feb 1979, F7-F9; Manama Gulf News Agency, 3 Mar 1979, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report, Middle East and North Africa, 5 Mar 1979. At a conference in Washington on 25 Sep 1981, sponsored by the Middle East Institute, Dr. Michael H. Van Dusen, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, House Committee on Foreign Affairs also confirmed Soviet and South Yemeni culpability in the conflict.
- [299] New York Times, 12 Feb 1978, 4; New York Times, 27 Feb 1979, 11; New York Times, 1 Mar 1979, A3; New York Times, 6 Mar 1979, A8; Peterson, J.E. Conflict in the Yemens and Superpower Involvement, Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, Dec 1981, 24. Peterson provides an interesting look at Yemeni events in this period, but he is far less surefooted in placing those events in the context of superpower involvement.
- [300] Significantly, the Chinese again demonstrated their support for U.S. actions in the Yemen crisis by denouncing the Minsk's operations in the Gulf of Aden. Needless to say they also objected to the VTOL carrier's deployment to the Pacific. Center for Naval Analyses, Memorandum, (CNA)80-0558.09, "The Political Significance of the Minsk Group's Deployment 25 Feb-1 Jul 1979," 18 Apr 1980, 37-41, 44-52
- [301] New York Times, 29 Nov 1979, 9; New York Times, 19 Dec 1979, 17
- [302] Far Eastern Economic Review, 19 Dec 1980, 16
- [303] Although the Soviets threatened to link events in Indochina with SALT II, Moscow backed down when President Carter, according to

Strobe Talbott, told Dobrynin that the U.S. had just as much reason to complain about the PDRY's attack on North Yemen and that the U.S. and Soviet Union must conclude a SALT accord before the strain in their relations got out of control. Shortly afterwards, Brezhnev made a speech which condemned China's actions while indicating that he would meet with Carter in the near future to sign a SALT II treaty. Talbott, Endgame, 255-256. See also New York Times, 19 Jun 1979, 1; New York Times, 6 Jun 1979, 11; New York Times, 24 Sep 1979, 1

- [304] Hong Kong, AFP, 18 Sep 1979, FBIS: China, 18 Sep 1979, C1
- [305] New York Times, 4 Apr 1979, 5; New York Times, 7 Apr 1979, 4; New York Times, 8 Apr 1979, 5; New York Times, 15 Apr 1979, 11
- [306] There are a number of other studies of Chinese crisis management including Chan, Steve, "Chinese Conflict Calculus and Behavior Assessment from a Perspective of Conflict Management," World Politics, April 1978, 391-410; Gurtov, Melvin and Byong-Moo Hwang, China Under Threat: The Politics of Strategy and Diplomacy, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Md., 1981. These studies tend to confirm and supplement Whiting's seminal work on Chinese crisis behavior. Unlike Whiting, however, they do look at Chinese behavior in the Ussuri crisis, and Edward Ross applies Chan's calculus to the Sino-Vietnamese border war: Ross, Edward, "Chinese Conflict Management," Military Review, January 1980, 13-25. However, like Whiting's work, these studies tend to be Sino-centric and do not attempt to integrate U.S. and Soviet behavior in their theories.
- [307] Casualty figures vary, but the incursion was apparently costly to both sides. See Jencks, "'China's 'Punitive' War'" Asian Survey, August 1979, 812; Asian Security 1979, 122
- [308] New York Times, 14 Mar 1979, A3; Asian Security 1979, 124
- [309] Washington Post, 26 Jun 1980, A1
- [310] See Fn 250
- [311] Indeed, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Ilyichev went to Beijing in October 1982 to talk about the possibility of renewing negotiations. Moreover, even if Sino-Soviet negotiations resume—as they have done periodically since 1969—they are likely to be contentious. China's negotiating position has stiffened, even though the Chinese have been de-emphasizing their border differences with Moscow. The Zhongnanhai not only wants the Kremlin to reduce its military presence along the Sino-Soviet border and in Mongolia but also to withdraw from Afghanistan and to curtail its support for Vietnam in

- Kampuchea. Washington Post, 5 Oct 1982, A3; Beijing Review, 19 Jul 1982, FBIS: China, 19 Jul 1982, C1
- [312] Secretary of State Alexander Haig's offer in June 1981 to discuss military cooperation with China has been held up by the controversy over U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. That controversy has abated--although not resolved--as result of the U.S.-China joint communique in August 1982. Thus, Washington's recent decision to sell China a highly sophisticated computer system with military applications indicates that Sino-U.S. efforts at military cooperation may be getting back on track. Washington Post, 17 Jun 1981, A1; U.S. Department of State, "U.S.-China Joint Communique," Current Policy No. 413, August 1982; Washington Post, 22 Sep 1982, A15
- [313] For a recent example of Chinese approval of Japan's military efforts against the Soviet Union see Beijing, Xinhua, 19 Jul 1982, FBIS: China, 21 Jul 1982, D2-D3
- [314] Asian Wall Street Journal, 17 May 1982, 1; Far Eastern Economic Review, 2 Oct 1981, 12
- [315] For example, Beijing, Xinhua, 16 Sep 1982, FBIS: China, 22 Sep 1982, E1. See also Beijing, Xinhua, 17 Jul 1982, FBIS: China, 17 Jul 1982, C1
- [316] Takashi Tajima, "China and Southeast Asia: Strategic Interests and Policy Prospects," Adelphi Paper, No. 172, Winter 1981, 17-21
- [317] Ibid., 34-38, Asian Security 1979, 100
- [318] For China's attitude towards Afghanistan see Vertzberger, Yaacov, "Afghanistan in China's Policy," Problems of Communism, May-June 1982, 1-23
- [319] Ibid., 12
- [320] Far Eastern Economic Review, 26 Mar 1982, 14-16
- [321] Takashi, "China and Southeast Asia," Adelphi Paper, No. 172, Winter 1981, 30-31
- [322] U.S. Department of Defense, Soviet Military Power, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1981, 93
- [323] For example, Bangkok, National Review, 19 Aug 1982, FBIS: AP, J1

[324] For example, Beijing, Xinhua, 28 Jul 1982, FBIS: China,
29 Jul 1982, E2-E3; Beijing, Xinhua, 26 Jul 1982, FBIS: China,
27 Jul 1982, E1-E2; Hanoi, Quan Doi Nhan Dan, 12 Mar 1982,
FBIS: AP, 15 Apr 1982, K4-K5; Hanoi, VNA, 9 Sep 1981, FBIS:
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[325] Tokyo, J1J1, 6 Aug 1981

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